POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

THE MURDER BY CONSTANCE KENT.

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THE SECRET SLAYING OF SAVILE KENT AND THE BELATED CONFESSION OF THE CRIME

"When the scourge
Inexorable, and the torturing hour
Calls us to penance."
—MILTON, "Paradise Lost," Book II.

PART II.

UNTIL Constance was arrested the voice of the public was against her, declaring that only she could have committed the crime; but the moment that she was in durance popular sympathy veered round, and began to think that, after all, she might not have done it. In other words, the delight of the public is really in the chase and not in the capture.

On July 27 Constance Kent was brought before the magistrates, and charged with the murder of her little step-brother. The court-room was crowded with sympathisers, who now encouraged her, although they had previously believed her guilty. The first witness was Eliza Gough, who, in spite of the unhappy tragedy of June 20 and her own arrest, had gone back to the Kents as nurse. She gave the same evidence in substance as at the inquest. Then Whicher produced two schoolmates of the accused girl, intending by their evidence to establish some kind of motive for the crime.

The first of them, Miss Moody, could only relate a trivial conversation with the accused, in which the latter told her that she disliked her younger brother and sisters.

"I believe," said the witness, "it was through jealousy, and because the parents showed great partiality. I have remonstrated with her on what she said. I was walking with her one day, and said, 'Won't it be nice to go home for the holidays so soon?' She replied, 'It may be to your home, but mine's different.' She also led me to infer, though I do not remember her precise words, that she did not dislike the child, except for the partiality shown by the parents, and because the second family were treated much better than the first. I remember no other conversation about the deceased boy; she has only very slightly referred to him."

That was valuable evidence on which to found a charge of murder! But, flimsy as is this childish story of a young girl's petulance, the evidence given by the second schoolgirl, a Miss Hatherall, was even less to the point. She remembered having heard Constance say that her parents showed partiality to the children of the second marriage, and that Mr. Kent used to compare his youngest son with his previous ones, saying what a fine little fellow he was, and that he would grow up a finer man than his half-brothers. She had never heard the prisoner say anything particular about the deceased.

Mr. Parsons, the doctor, was next called, and after describing the injuries inflicted on the murdered child, said that he accompanied Foley in searching the house on the day of the crime, and went with him into the prisoner's bedroom. He examined the linen in the chest of drawers and the nightcap and nightgown on the bed. They were all free from the slightest stain of blood. One thing he did remark, however, and pointed it out to the police-officer—the nightdress looked very clean, the starch in the frilling and cuffs being still quite stiff, whereas, if the garment had been worn since the previous Saturday, it would be natural to expect that the freshness would have gone out of the starching, and that the nightdress would have been more crumpled. Superintendent Foley examined the article with him, but did not attach any importance to the cleanliness of it.

After the doctor, the London detective produced the housemaid, and the story of the missing night-gown was told, together with Constance's visit to the lumber room while Sarah Cox was preparing the linen baskets for the wash. In all this there was nothing whatever to bring the charge home to anybody. To lose an article in the wash was, certainly, not an uncommon accident, and there was absolutely no reason to believe that Constance abstracted her dirty garment from the basket while the housemaid had gone downstairs to fetch her a glass of water.

That finished all the evidence for the prosecution, and the detective pressed for a remand to allow of further investigations. Mr. Peter Edlin, who later became well known as Chairman of the Lambeth Sessions, and was knighted, addressed the Bench very briefly on behalf of the prisoner, laying great stress on the want of any evidence to connect the prisoner with the crime.

In spite of a further appeal for a remand, the magistrates decided that there was no case against Constance Kent, and she was discharged, but lest any responsibility should rest on their shoulders, they bound Mr. Kent over in his own recognisances in £200 to produce his daughter if required to do so.

This decision was received with great applause from all present in court, which applause was ratified by the country at large. On all sides it was agreed that the

Nurse Gough arrested for the second time.

grounds of the accusation were absurd, and that no one short of a madman could have suspected anyone on the very slight data produced. Inspector Whicher was blamed for bungling, and was recalled from Road to headquarters in disgrace. No one remembered that the only facts which had been discovered had been due to the astuteness

of the inspector, who had a long record for excellent service. He took the matter very much to heart, and, feeling that he had been unjustly treated, for his action in the Road murder mystery stood in his way in his profession, he retired from the force in 1863, and, it is said, died of a broken heart.

Not satisfied with having arrested two persons on suspicion of killing little Savile Kent, the public felt that the full share of excitement had not been got out of the tragedy and cast around for a fresh person to accuse of the crime.

It was pretty clear that whoever perpetrated the foul act was in the house on the night of the murder, and so they cogitated for a short time as to who should next be pilloried. Then some brilliant individual hinted that possibly Mr. Kent had killed his own son. "Why did not he give evidence at the inquest?" asked the sapient individual, for all her actions on the night of the awful event. Still the fact remained that the child had been abducted from her room, and that she had failed to raise an alarm when she first missed him. Then it was hinted that Gough could not prove that she had been asleep all night, so by logical steps the following wonderful theory grew. If Gough was not asleep, she would have seen the person who took the child away; but she declared that she had seen nobody, therefore she was screening someone, and who should she be more inclined to screen than a lover. So it was decided that Gough had secreted a lover in the house on the night of the murder, and that when the lover had come into her room, in the dead of the night, to visit her, the child had started up. Fearing discovery, the lover had pressed his hand on the boy's throat to silence him, and had, whether intentionally or by accident, choked the child.

COLLECTED AS MANY YOKELS AS HAD NOTHING BETTER TO DO.

ignoring the fact that the unhappy father had volunteered to say what he knew and that his evidence had been dispensed with as unnecessary. That Mr. Kent had always borne an irreproachable character, that his partiality for the boy was well known, availed him nothing, and the busybodies began to whisper reports of nameless profligacies which they alleged Mr. Kent was addicted to.

Did not everyone know that servants rarely stopped at Road Hill House for any length of time? Well, that was because of Mr. Kent. He was a thoroughly bad man, so said public opinion; therefore, he was the culprit. For all this they had to produce some specific charge to bring against him, and much ingenuity was displayed by theory-makers before a suitable hypothesis was framed, but it was a good melodramatic charge when the inventors had turned out the finished article.

There was, without doubt, a slender reason for suspecting Nurse Gough, though she had been able to account

To divert suspicion the body of the murdered boy had then been carried to the disused closet, and the throat cut and the stab in the chest inflicted to hide the real cause of death. "Where was the lover?" was the next question, and the theory-constructors declared that who would be more likely to suffer by exposure than Mr. Kent himself. So rumour drew tragic pictures of the father slaying his own son to hide his adulterous intercourse with his nurse.

In the place of Whicher, a solicitor from Bath, named Slack, had taken up the case, and he readily fell in with the idea of the lover, but he would not go so far as to agree that the most probable lover was the master of the house. However, he had some sort of case to go upon, and applied for a warrant for the arrest of Gough a second time.

By the time that matters had reached this stage, Gough had left the Kents and gone into service near Isleworth. There she was arrested and brought back to Devizes Gaol.

Early in October the Wiltshire magistrates heard the charge against her. She was defended by Mr. Ribton, while the case was conducted on behalf of the Crown by Mr. T. W. Saunders, a well-known barrister of the South-western Circuit.

The whole of the evidence which was produced at the inquest and at the examination of Constance Kent was recapitulated, and over thirty witnesses were examined, but not a single new fact was produced, excepting that Mr. Parsons said that he had changed his mind, and thought that death was due to strangulation and not to the throat being cut; but how he came to that conclusion, since the body had not been exhumed, no one could tell, and his evidence bore no weight at all.

Of the many villagers who were called to show that Gough had a lover, not one could recall having seen her speaking to any man, and the case broke down hopelessly. Constance Kent was called as a witness, and, instead of giving evidence concerning the relations between Gough and the family, preferred to assure the court of her own fondness for Savile, and said that on the very evening of the murder she had been romping with her little brother. The prosecuting counsel also went out of his way to express his conviction of the absolute innocence of Constance.

After a hearing which lasted four days the charge was dismissed, and Gough liberated on recognisances being entered into for her appearance, if called for. The Chairman of the Bench commented very strongly on her demeanour, and said:

"Considering how much curiosity she has been exposed to—the anxious inquiries of the family, the officious inquiries of so many others, the official inquiries of the police—it is very remarkable that we should see no appearance either of sullen reserve or of over-activity." Thus the absence of the great criminal trait of "overdoing it" told strongly in the accused woman's favour, and even impressed the country magistrates.

One good came from the third arrest and subsequent trial. It was proved, without the least doubt, that the murder had been committed by someone who was in the house. This was the last official inquiry for a long time; but there was a charming unofficial inquiry opened in the beginning of November by an eccentric magistrate, named Saunders, who established himself at Road fully intent on unravelling the mystery. His proceedings were so extraordinary that he was quickly disowned by his brother justices, who were horrified at his methods. Unfortunately, a complete record of this strange inquisition has not been kept, but there are a few specimens extant, from which some idea of the worthy's *modus operandi* may be gathered.

He collected as many yokels as had nothing better to do, in one of the large rooms in the village inn, and, having opened the "court," after a formula invented by himself, he proceeded to address general inquiries to his audience, on the off-chance of obtaining some clue which might afterwards be of value, something after this fashion:

"Is there anyone here who can give me any account of Mr. Samuel Savile Kent's proceedings on the Monday after Midsummer Day?" No answer.

"Is there anyone here who saw Mr. Kent on June 25?" No answer.

"If there is anyone here, let him speak out without fear, favour, or affection, and be kind enough to make that inquiry among his friends. Is there anyone here who knows anything of his proceedings on the Tuesday? Is there anyone here who *said* anything about Kent's proceedings on June 27?" About this point his memory usually failed him, and he had to stop to refresh himself, while the audience talked in whispers, awed by the wisdom of the Bench.

An amusing dialogue between Mr. Saunders and Superintendent Foley has been preserved by Mr. Atlay, the well-known barrister, which is too good to be omitted. It runs as follows:

Foley: I scarcely wetted my lips, or ate anything, all day, sir.

Saunders: I am extremely sorry that I am eating—don't put this down, gentlemen—and wetting my lips.

Foley: I tell you plain, sir, I was obliged to sit down, I was so exhausted with excitement, and I asked Mr. Kent to give me something.

Saunders: I can't for the life of me see why you shouldn't eat a bit of bread and have a sup of water, as I am doing. (The "water" which the learned magistrate was drinking was of a light yellow colour, and smelt suspiciously like brandy.)

Foley: I do not do so, sir, when on duty, so that people cannot say that Foley drinks this, or Foley likes that.

Saunders: Quite right. You knew Mr. Kent had a larder and a cook.

Foley: I had a glass of port wine and water.

Saunders: I think that might be taken down, if considered material to the fact.

Foley (anxiously): I don't think that is material, sir, and it ought not to be put down.

And so the magistrate blundered on, making an exhibition of himself, and bringing ridicule on the Wiltshire

INSIDE HE SAW A BUNDLE

Commission of the Peace until he was stopped by his brother justices. But, just as a putrid oyster may contain a pearl of great value, so the screeds of rubbish which Saunders collected brought to light one fact which was regarded as very significant. It transpired that while the police were searching Road Hill House on the day of the murder, one of the constables went into the scullery and opened the furnace door of the copper. Inside he saw a bundle, which he pulled out, and found that it was a woman's shift, very dirty and covered with blood. The other constables saw it, and it was shown to Foley, who abused the constable who found it, saying that he should have more decency than to expose such an object, and told him to replace the shift in the furnace. Whether this was done or not, *the garment was never seen again.*

It may be that Foley had it left where it was, and stationed the two constables in the kitchen on the Saturday night to catch the owner of the blood-stained chemise when she came at night to regain possession of it. At any rate, the garment disappeared, and Foley did not think it worth his while to mention the circumstance to anyone.

The actual result of Foley's mysterious bungling was that after a bloodstained chemise was found in a house

in which murder had just been committed, it was left unguarded, and the owner of it was able to get it again into her possession and destroy it unchallenged. Foley never mentioned this fact, which certainly did not redound to his credit, to Inspector Whicher, and when the matter was made public in November, Whicher wrote from Scotland Yard to the magistrates, and informed them that he had been kept in complete ignorance of the discovery.

Towards the end of November, a last effort was made to reopen the inquiry into the death of Savile Kent, when the Attorney-General moved in the Court of Queen's Bench to quash the coroner's inquisition and for a writ to issue for the appointment of special commissioners to examine witnesses and to prosecute further inquiries.

The Attorney-General pointed out to the judges that certain points had received insufficient attention at the inquest, such as the removal of the child's blanket, the state of the bedclothes in the boy's cot, which were carefully folded, and the absence of sufficient spilt blood to account for death by cutting or stabbing. Furthermore, it was alleged that the coroner had not done his duty in not accepting Mr. Kent's evidence.

After a protracted hearing, the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Alexander Cockburn, refused the application, saying that the only real point on which it rested was the alleged misconduct on the part of the coroner in not examining Mr. Kent. He thought that Mr. Sylvester would have exercised sounder judgment if he had admitted the evidence of the father; but the court could not set aside an inquisition for a mere error of judgment. Furthermore, the Chief Justice pointed out that if the court did set aside the inquest, and permit of a special commission being appointed, such commission would virtually be for the purpose of examining the people who were known to have committed the murder, with a view to incriminating them out of their own depositions, a course which had always been most repugnant to English law, which does not compel anyone to incriminate himself.

In spite of this very sound judgment, the public were far from satisfied, and articles were written to the papers, denouncing "the law's protection of the Road murderer"; still, as a whole, the press doubted whether any real good would be served by reopening the inquiry after such a lapse of time.

Gradually the excitement died down, and the Road Murder Mystery was forgotten. The American War and troubles on the Continent furnished people with plenty of other things to think about, and the death of one little boy could not compete in interest with the slaughter of hundreds and the remodelling of the face of a Continent.

Road Hill House had now too many sad associations for Mr. Kent, and he felt that he could not live there any longer; so he gave up the place and moved to Wales, where he lived in retirement. He was still mindful that he was responsible for Constance, if justice demanded her production, and what to do with the girl was a difficult problem. It would have been too painful for her to have lived at home, since her parents knew how she was galled by their affection for their children, and the terrible suspicion which had attached to her made her very unhappy.

MR. KENT PROPOSES A TRIP ABROAD.

So Mr. Kent proposed that she should go abroad for a time and try to forget the troubles of her childhood. Constance agreed, and went as a paying guest to a convent on the Continent.

Now that she was removed from the environment which had stunted her moral growth, Constance expanded wonderfully, and became a very charming young lady. She was deeply impressed with the religious aspect of the conventual life, but while sorely tempted, did not feel sufficiently convinced of the claims of the Church of Rome to abandon the faith of her childhood. Wishing to combine the monastic life with the tenets of the Church of England, she left the convent in 1863, and went as a guest to St. Mary's Home, Brighton, an Anglican Sisterhood attached to St. Paul's Church. There she came under the influence of the Rev. Arthur Douglas Wagner, perpetual curate of St. Paul's, and general spiritual director to the Sisterhood.

Mr. Wagner was one of the pioneers of the High Church Movement in the Church of England, and, though he encountered fearful opposition from rabid Protestants in his early days, lived to be reckoned almost a

saint before his death last year. He had a great charm of manner, and his influence with those who came in contact with him was very great.

The quiet of the Sisterhood, and the happy, useful lives which the devoted sisters lived, attracted Constance, and she felt that she would be glad to end her days in the little convent with them. But, in the stillness of the night watches in her cell and in the moments of religious enthusiasm in the beautiful church, a figure seemed to stand between her and the peace she sought. Time after time she tried to wave away the phantom which haunted her, but it would not leave her, and the smiling, cheerful face which she presented to the sisters and to those to whom she ministered hid an aching heart—a heart which was afraid to hold commune with itself.

Then came the year 1865, and Constance could bear it no longer. One day, on her knees, she told the Rev. Director the tale of her life, and he wept with her and shared her sorrow, but as yet she was not strong enough to make the only reparation for her sins which was acceptable to her God. The forty days of Lent, with its increased austerities and its acts of self-denial, told heavily on the young woman, almost borne down with her secret trouble. But Lent has an ending in the contemplation of the sufferings of the Saviour, and the tale of His death strengthened Constance to do what was right. So she sought out her Father Confessor again, and with him went to the Lady Superior of the convent, to whom she laid bare her trouble.

Next Mr. Wagner sought an interview with the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, and presented to him the following note:

"Sir,—It is by my own particular request that the bearer now informs you of my guilt, which it is my desire to have publicly made known.

"Constance Kent."

Next day the peace of the convent was exchanged for a cell at Bow Street, and on the following morning Constance Kent appeared in the dock at Bow Street Police Court.

The proceedings there were very short. Mr. Wagner stated that no inducement of any sort had been made by him to the prisoner to give herself up, and he handed in the following signed confession, which, he stated, the prisoner wished to be read:

"I, Constance Emilie Kent, alone and unaided, in the night of the 29th of June, 1860, murdered at Road Hill House, Wiltshire, one Francis Savile Kent. Before the deed was done no one knew of my intention, nor afterwards of my guilt. No one assisted me in the crime, nor in the evasion of discovery."

After that there was nothing to be done but to send the prisoner down to Devizes to take her trial at the next assizes.

Tremendous public interest was taken in the trial, although it was known that there could be but one conclusion. On July 20, exactly five years to the day since her former arrest, Constance Kent was placed in the dock, before Mr. Justice Willes. She was dressed in black, and wore a thick veil. Her demeanour was very humble, and she stood, apparently fully alive to her awful position, with her hands folded in front of her and her eyes cast down.

When called on to plead, she said "Guilty" in a low tone of voice. The judge thought that there must be some mistake, and himself asked her: "Are you guilty or not guilty of having wilfully, intentionally, and with malice aforethought, killed and murdered your brother?"

"Guilty, my lord," replied the poor prisoner. Again the judge repeated the question, and again received the same reply; then he turned to the court, and said, "The plea must be recorded." There was a dead hush in the court-room for a minute, and then Mr. John Duke Coleridge, who afterwards became Lord Chief Justice of England, rose and addressed the judge.

"My lord," he said, "before your lordship passes sentence on my client, I desire to say two things: First, solemnly, in the presence of Almighty God, as a person who values her own soul, she wishes me to say that the guilt is hers alone, and that her father and others who have so long suffered most unjust and cruel suspicion are wholly and absolutely innocent; and, secondly, that she was not driven to this act, as has been asserted, by unkind treatment at home, as she met with nothing there but tender affection and love. And I hope I may add, and not improperly, that it gives me a melancholy pleasure to be the organ of these statements for her, because, on my honour, I believe them to be true."

When asked whether she had anything to say that

judgment to die should not be given to her by the court, Constance replied in a clear tone:

"I have nothing to say, my lord."

Mr. Justice Willes was never supposed to be a sentimental judge, and he had pronounced the extreme sentence of the law many times in his life; but when he came to condemn the young girl who stood before him, "to be hanged by the neck until she was dead," his feelings overcame him, and he broke down into tears. This added deeply to the prisoner's painful situation, and she also burst out crying, while counsel and spectators had not a dry eye between them. After a struggle, the judge got through the terrible formula, and at once left the court for a short time to recover himself, while the spectators returned home, having lost all appetite for criminal law for that day at least.

The scene is the more remarkable since no one believed for a moment that the prisoner would ever stand on the scaffold, and it was subsequently reported that, before he returned to the court, Mr. Justice Willes had despatched an urgent request to the Home Secretary to commute the sentence which he had just pronounced. Be

that as it may, in a day or two the sentence was changed into one of penal servitude for life.

It is a very unusual thing for counsel to allow their clients to plead guilty to a capital charge, and when Mr. Coleridge was instructed to pass the plea by the solicitors he refused to do so until he had definite instructions from the prisoner herself. In accordance with his wish, he received the following letter from Constance, written in a firm hand:

"SIR,—I announced my determination yesterday to Mr. Rodway to plead guilty, and then, if the judge should consider that a trial would conduce to clear those who are unjustly suspected, I would consent, and leave the case in the hands of my counsel for that purpose. If the case is not gone into, it will not be believed that my confession is a true one, and I am persuaded that nothing will tend to clear the innocent so completely as my conviction.—Yours truly,

"CONSTANCE KENT."

Before Constance went to Pentonville to commence her term of penal servitude, she confessed to the prison doctor

Constance takes one of her father's razors.

at Devizes, and to Dr. Bucknill, who was sent to inquire into her mental state, how she committed the crime.

She said that she got possession of one of her father's razors some days before the murder was committed, and hid it. On the night itself she undressed and went to bed. She did not go to sleep, but waited till all the household was slumbering, and shortly after midnight left her bedroom and went downstairs. First she opened the drawing-room door, and the window-shutters; then she went up to the nursery, withdrew the blanket from between the sheet and counterpane of the child's cot, and placed it ready beside her. She next took the sleeping child out of his bed, and after rearranging the bedclothes, wrapped him in the blanket and carried him downstairs to the drawing-room. When she got there she put on her goloshes. She was only dressed in her night-dress. Holding the child with one hand, she pushed up the window and stepped out. When she reached the closet she lighted a candle, which she had previously placed there, and while the boy was sleeping cut his throat. At first she was alarmed because the blood did not seem to come, so then she stabbed her brother in the chest, and, wrapping him in the blanket, thrust him down the latrine. She returned to her bedroom the same way that she came, and when there examined her night-gown. There were only two spots of blood on it. These she washed out and threw the water away. She then put on a clean night-dress and got into bed. In the morning the other night-gown was dry, and she folded it up, placing it in her drawer with her other clothes. Three or four days later she found that the stains were not quite gone, so she hid the garment for several days till she had time to burn it, which she did, in her own bedroom, putting the ashes into the kitchen grate. She recovered the night-gown, which she had put on clean on Saturday, from the washing basket while Sarah Cox was downstairs getting her some water; she had previously asked the maid for her purse, so as to find out in what part of the basket her clothes had been placed. The blood-stained garment which was found in the furnace in the scullery was not hers, and she had no idea whose it was. While Mr. Kent had gone to fetch the police on Saturday morning she had placed the razor, which she had cleaned, back in his wardrobe.

In justice to Inspector Whicher we should state that he was fully convinced of Constance Kent's guilt and wrote to that effect to a brother detective on November the 23rd, 1860, giving his theory of the committal of the crime, which exactly tallied with what had actually taken place, and he concluded his letter with the words:

"I have little doubt but that confession would have been made if Miss Constance had been remanded for another week."

Constance Kent spent the first few years of her convict life at Pentonville, being subsequently removed to the Female Convict Station at Aylesbury, from whence she was released after serving for twenty years, and died a few years ago.

The history of the Road Mystery is an example of the manner in which unskilled people are liable to hinder the course of justice, even with the very best intentions. If the request of the expert detective had been granted the whole case would have been exposed in less than a month, but the meddling of the public, and the crass ignorance of the local magistrates, shrouded the case in mystery, and but for the workings of conscience Constance Kent might have gone to her grave without ever bearing the brand of Cain in the face of the world.

His Birthday.

A MURDERER was once hanged on his birthday. He grimly announced the fact that it was his natal day to the officials when they aroused him to take the long, last journey. "'Ere," said the ruffian, "ain't some on yer a-goin' to wish a bloke many 'appy returns of the day?"

A Gruesome Dish.

ONE of the most interesting cases of wrong conjecture took place towards the commencement of last century at Liverpool. One Saturday evening an old lady, named Robinson, brought an earthenware jar, covered with brown paper, to Mr. Wilson, a baker, and asked him to allow it to remain in the oven all night and be cooked at the same time as the dinner dishes which people brought in on Sunday. To prevent curiosity, she said that the pan contained some roots which she wished to have dried to make medicine with. The baker agreed, but when he came to take out the pies on Sunday he was almost overcome by the frightful smell which proceeded from the oven. Guessing that the old woman's roots were at fault, he opened the pan to look at them, and was horrified to find that the vessel contained a human head. The police were communicated with, and the woman arrested and charged with intending to eat human flesh. On her explaining that she only wished to get the skull sufficiently dried to make a powder for the cure of epilepsy, she was discharged, after being fined a small sum for stealing the skull from a neighbouring churchyard.

A Father's Appalling Crime and Anguish.

"So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
Which he once wore;
The glory from his grey hairs gone
For evermore!"

—WHITTIER, "Ichabod."

THE following awful incident in the annals of crime, extraordinary and horrible as it may appear, we find, after most careful investigation, to be true in every detail. So eminently were the circumstances surrounding it calculated to excite a deep and lasting impression, that Geo. Lillo, the famous dramatist of the earliest part of last century, used the extraordinary occurrence as a basis for one of his most thrilling tragedies.

It is true that he took a poet's and playwright's licence, and in a powerful manner worked up the story of the fearful murder, with many alterations of scene and character, but he preserved the main incidents. We shall adhere to the facts and describe the tragedy as it took place upon the stage of real life, feeling confident that it does not need the slightest colouring nor any further dramatic power thrown into it by the aid of those side-lights usually brought to bear by the fertile brain of the old or modern dramatist.

We must, then, ask our readers to take with us a flight of fancy back just one hundred years, and to travel with us to the fair province of Normandy, in France. Our destination is a lovely spot between the old town of Louviers and the cathedral city of Evreux, and we shall put up at a famous hostelry known as the Cheval Blanc. The roadside inn is well patronised, for it is what we should call in this country a posting-house, where the horses of the diligence are changed and where travellers halt to partake of the good fare of the house. It is charmingly situated on the banks of the pretty little River Eure, at its junction with the Iton, and is a favourite haunt of the fisherman or the lover of solitude and the beauties of nature, for it is surrounded by picturesque woodland and verdant hills, and the very garden of the inn is washed by the waters of the two streams.

This ancient and solitary "auberge" is kept by a stout, bronze-faced Frenchman of some sixty years of age, and his wife is a portly, amiable-looking, active dame some ten years younger.

They employ no servants, for their family is sufficient in number and are all old enough to be of service. There are four boys, all fine young fellows, ranging in ages from eighteen to twenty-four, and M. Narbonne (for that is mine host's name) is justly proud of his sons. They are a happy family, and work with a right good will for the good of the whole. Jacques, the eldest, perhaps is less liked amongst the customers than his brothers, for he is a sour-tempered fellow, and is the only blot upon the family happiness, constantly picking quarrels with his brothers and sulking with his parents. Little heed, however, is taken of his disagreeable temper; and, as his department is in the kitchen, he being an excellent chef, having gained his knowledge of the culinary art in Paris, he is brought but little in contact with the others, who are engaged mostly in the stables or looking after the comfort of their father's guests.

Take them altogether, they are a united family, the light of the domestic circle being concentrated upon the youngest son, Pierre, as smart a youth as ever threw a leg over a saddle or brought down a pheasant in the preserves belonging to the old house. Indeed, Pierre is the life and soul of the Cheval Blanc, and if a customer wants a day's angling or shooting, or if he desires to post on to Evreux, it is Pierre who must take the rod, gun, or reins, for he is merry company and an adept at everything he undertakes.

So much for your introduction to the innkeeper and his family. There is, however, another to whom you must be introduced, and that is the brother to mine host of the Cheval Blanc. It would seem strange in our own country, but in France in those days it is nothing out of the ordinary to find a tradesman's brother a minister of the church. So it is in this family; Père Narbonne, brother to the innkeeper and uncle to the boys, is a priest attached to the cathedral at Evreux. Père Pierre (for that is the Christian name of the "holy friar," after whom young Narbonne is called) is one of those jolly, capon-lined clerics who love a stoup of good wine, a song, and a joke; so he is often seen at the Cheval Blanc, which is only an easy stage by diligence from Evreux, when his duties at the cathedral permit of his absence. And now, if you are introduced to a charming little black-eyed damsel, Mdlle. Annette Dubois, daughter of a small farmer in the neighbourhood, you have the whole of the dramatis personæ necessary to proceed with the story.

At this particular period (1792) it will be necessary to mention that for a wonder all Europe was at peace, but on the French political horizon there was a ruddy glare which indicated coming war. Louis, the King, had been issuing manifestos to his soldiers and subjects on the frontiers to preserve tranquillity, for in the Low Countries things were in a very unsettled state, and hostilities with Austria and Germany seemed inevitable. To be ready in case of need, the French army was, therefore, speedily augmented, and conscription was the order of the day, youths as well as men from town and village being rapidly enrolled as their numbers were drawn.

Amongst the earliest to be called was young Pierre Narbonne.

To the lad himself nothing could be more desirable, for he had long dreamed of the glories of battle, and had never once given a thought to its horrors. But to his mother and sweetheart it was altogether a different affair. The former was broken-hearted at the loss of her favourite boy, and the latter was only pacified by the hope that the promise made by her lover that he would come back to claim her, his breast covered with medals and his pockets filled with louis, the spoils of the war. The blow to the mother was very severe, but when number after number was drawn in the conscription for another three of her boys it was too much for the poor woman. She broke down entirely, took to her bed, and within a couple of weeks mass for the repose of her soul was being said by Père Narbonne in the cathedral of Evreux.

Months passed on, and the war broke out; but it was long before news came to the innkeeper of his absent sons. The eldest was still at home, for he had not been drawn, but he was of little solace to his father, who had in appearance got ten years older in as many months. The absence of his boys, the opening of the war, and the consequent decline of trade seriously affected his banking account, and, besides the loss of his wife and the anxiety about his sons, ruin stood staring him in the face. Even the cheery voice of the priest, his entreaties, and his prayers failed to arrest the physical and mental decay of the innkeeper, whilst the dissipated habits of his eldest son, Jacques, only tended to hasten the downfall of the unfortunate man.

At length news came from the frontier. It was bad news, indeed. Two of his sons had been killed in an engagement with the Austrians. This was another great blow, but still there was the youngest. What had become of him? No news is good news, goes the saying, and that was the only consolation for the unhappy man, who now became but a shadow of himself and showed undoubted weakening of the intellect.

The business of the Cheval Blanc became less as one year, two years, three years passed by. Still no tidings of his darling boy. It was hope, and hope alone, which kept the old man alive now. He would willingly have gone to rest beside his dear wife in the little churchyard outside Evreux if it had not been for the hope that first of all he might embrace the son whom he loved before he died. Jacques, still more soured in temper at the decline of business, drank more freely than ever, and what little profits were made out of the failing business he absorbed. The son had long since given up ever seeing his brother again, and jeered at his father's tenacity to the belief that he would clasp the loved one in his arms once more. Even the priest endeavoured to

persuade his brother to cease to cherish the hope and bow to God's will.

Annette had kept the memory of her lover green, and the girl, who by this time had grown to be a beautiful woman, had a strong presentiment that her Pierre would return covered with glory to claim her. She had dreamed of his return a score of times. She had in her sleep heard the bells ring merrily, and had many a time, in fancy, donned her bridal dress and been the centre of the village festivities upon her nuptial day. How proudly she had swept down the chancel of the cathedral as she leaned upon the arm of the handsome, bronzed soldier, whose breast glittered with orders and whose spurs clinked musically upon the worn stones of the aisle. She had heard the organ peal as they left the sacred edifice and the bells clash out from the old church of St. Taurin, drowning the striking of the clock in the famous Tour de l'Horloge of Evreux. All this poor, patient Annette had seen and heard in her dreams. Still he

Two of his sons had been killed.

came not. Hand after hand had been offered her in marriage, but her heart was far away. Until she knew the worst it was still the brave soldier's. But if he were dead—what then? Then—the convent cell.

Ten years had passed away since his wife's death, and the innkeeper was in desperate straits. He had sold every rood of ground which belonged to him, and had mortgaged the house up to the hilt. He had borrowed all the money he could from the slender purse of his brother, and still clung on to the Cheval Blanc. He swore that he would never leave it unless he were carried out or his son Pierre returned. He must be welcomed to his old home, the house of his birth, and he knew that he would come some day—ay, some day!

The old man's apathy became so great at last that only two things could arouse him—a visit from Annette or the passing by or halting of soldiery. The girl would talk to him about his missing son and share his belief in his reappearance; to the soldiers he would put the most anxious questions, always receiving the same reply: "Had never met No. 7,689. Couldn't say whether dead or alive." To the authorities he had written repeatedly without getting any satisfactory reply. And so the awful, nourished suspense continued.

One autumn evening, late in the season, when the leaves were falling fast and the brown and golden-yellow foliage of the woodlands on the side of the hill in front of the house looked rich in the soft light of the setting sun, a clatter of horse's hoofs was heard on the hard chalk road, which brought the innkeeper to the door, for his son Jacques had gone to the neighbouring town, Louviers, on some business, and, with the exception of an old ostler in the stables, he was alone. It was a horseman, and in an instant Narbonne saw that he was not a civilian, for a heavy military cloak surrounded him and fell half over the horse's haunches, while he wore a blue-peaked képi, richly embroidered with silver lace, indicating that he was an officer in a cavalry regiment.

Swinging himself lightly from the saddle, the stranger cried out, "Bon soir!" in a hearty voice, to which the innkeeper politely replied. His senses were all alive now, and he was bursting to ask his stereotyped question about his son, when the officer called the ostler, who had heard the traveller stop and had come out, to take his horse to the stables. This done, he strode into the inn, where a large oil lamp was burning, and with a fixed look gazed at the old man for a few seconds. As he did so a sad expression came over his handsome countenance, which was almost a mahogany colour, so bronzed was it by the sun.

"Well, old man, have you been in this hostelry long?" questioned the officer as he threw off his great-cloak and disclosed his uniform, with the breast covered with medals. The reply was that he had been there for over a quarter of a century, that all his sons had been born there, that his wife had died there, and that he was but abiding his time to join her.

"Well, do not look so sad, my good man. I have what I think will be good news for you. I bring a message from your son Pierre, who is in my regiment, and I come to tell you that he is well, and that in a short time you will see him and embrace him. I should have ridden straight through to Evreux had I not promised on my word as a soldier to bring you these good tidings."

The old man reeled as if to fall at the receipt of this news which he had been awaiting for those long ten years. "Thank God! thank God!" was all he could utter.

Then the soldier ordered some wine and food, saying that he should stay at the inn that night if he could be accommodated, but that after dinner he must be supplied with a fresh horse and ride into Evreux, where he had most important business to transact that evening. On the morrow he would tell him something further about his son, although there was little to add beyond what he had already stated, that he was well and would shortly visit his home. After dinner he handed M. Narbonne a small valise which he had taken from his saddle-bag. He said to the landlord: "Take care of that for me until to-morrow. Be sure, now, you deposit it in a safe place, for it contains, as you can judge by the weight, much money and other valuables. I can trust you with it, you having been landlord of this house for so many years."

And with that he went to the door, swung himself into the saddle, and trotted off in the direction of Evreux.

It was close upon midnight when the officer returned, and found the old man waiting alone for him. He looked pale and fatigued, and the young soldier apologised for having kept him up until such a late hour. He had, he said, been to the town and called upon several friends, whom he had invited to dinner on the morrow, so that a choice and abundant banquet must be provided, and the best wine the house could supply be served.

The innkeeper bowed silently, and, candle in hand, conducted his guest to his bedroom, where, tired with his long ride, the soldier was soon in bed and fast asleep.

The following day was wild and cloudy. The soft autumn weather was suddenly swept away by the first of the bitterly cold winter winds, which howled round the gables of the old inn and shrieked through the denuded branches of the great bending trees before the house. It was hardly the sort of day to invite friends to take dinner with you in the country. What a transformation in twelve hours! But the invitations had been given, and it was too late to cancel them, although a downpour was threatened by the black clouds, and the inn was quite ten miles from the town.

At an early hour the priest called upon his brother, and in a cheerful voice that he had not assumed for many a long day, inquired after the health of the young officer who had, he had learned in Evreux, issued invitations for dinner that day. Narbonne, in a strange, sepulchral voice, replied that the officer was well, but that he had set out on horseback early in the morning to join his regiment.

"That is altogether impossible," said the priest smilingly. "That officer will assuredly dine with you to-day, and give you such accounts of your son as will afford you happiness you have little expected to experience on earth."

There was a strange expression stealing over the innkeeper's face as he shook with emotion and glared vacantly at his brother. Then, regaining his voice, which for the

moment he had lost, he gasped out the question as to whether the officer had been known to the brother before the previous day.

The reply was, "Perfectly. I have known him from his infancy."

"Who and what is he, in the name of the Almighty?" shrieked out the old man, with a terrible energy of manner which astonished the priest.

"Rest quiet until dinner. Then, my brother, shall this important secret to you be revealed," quietly replied the priest.

The old innkeeper's eyes now glared on the priest with a wildness that was painful to behold, and he was speechless with terror. The brother, still mistaking the source of his agitation, continued, "This is too much; I must no longer keep you in suspense. I beseech you, recollect the features of your young guest, and tell me if all-powerful Nature does not already trace out to your imagination the face of your darling, long-absent son."

NARBONNE SAW THAT HE WAS NOT A CIVILIAN.

Thus far did he hear his brother, when his face became corpse-like and his eyes became glazed as he fell all of a heap upon the floor in a swoon.

The affectionate brother knelt at his side and chafed his hands, whilst he called again and again for help. He blamed himself a hundred times for having broken the news so suddenly, and wished a thousand times more that he had not divulged the truth, but awaited the issue of events. At length his efforts were successful, and the innkeeper became conscious, and was supported to an easy-chair.

The priest, with great tenderness, then bade his brother compose himself, and commenced a fuller explanation of the circumstances, thinking that this would relieve the mental blow he had given by breaking the fact of his son's return so suddenly. He told how young Pierre Narbonne had for bravery, merit, and valorous deeds been rewarded with rank, now holding a commission, and awaiting only a few weeks to receive greater promotion; how he had returned with a large sum which had been his share of prize money; how that, on the previous evening, he had observed that his father had not recognised him after his ten years' absence, so changed had he become; how, pleased at the opportunity of giving him an agreeable surprise, he had come over to him (his uncle), and they had spent a happy hour together.

The priest told his brother, whose parted lips were as pale as death, whilst beads of perspiration rolled down his forehead, how the distinguished young soldier had gone to his ladylove and found her still true to him, and that they had arranged for the wedding to take place at once. He then described how the son had determined that this should be a day of rejoicing amongst his family and friends, and that the feast should take place at his father's house, where he would present to him sufficient money to release him from all his financial embarrassments.

"Now, be brave, my brother," said the priest. "Forgive me for my indiscretion, and you and Jacques busy yourselves preparing for your guests, as there is no time to waste."

But old Narbonne showed no gladness. Slowly rising from the chair and quivering with painful convulsions, he uttered a long, shrill shriek and fell writhing at his brother's feet, and, foaming at the mouth, he howled as if possessed by some demoniacal spirit. The terrified ostler, attracted by the extraordinary noise, rushed up to the officer's room to

ask his assistance, and was met by the woman servant at the door of the chamber. A piercing shriek from the room above told that a terrible crime had been discovered. There, lying upon the bed, with throat cut from ear to ear, was the cold, stark body of what but a few hours before was a magnificent specimen of humanity in the full vigour and prime of life.

The sound of the woman's shriek from above seemed to arouse the old man, and with his brother's assistance he once more was seated in the chair. Then, covering his face with his hands, he burst into a flood of tears.

"May God have mercy upon me!" he exclaimed. "What have I done? What have I done? Murdered my own darling boy! Killed the only being I loved in the world! Destroyed him for whom I have prayed for all these long years! Oh, God! Oh, God! take me before Thee and deal out the punishment I deserve!"

Then, looking at his brother, he started, and his face assumed a contented and happy expression. Then he burst out into a peal of laughter, exclaiming, "Yes, yes, Pierre, my darling boy, you have come home at last! How happy we shall be, mother—how happy we shall all be together once more! Come near me, Pierre—come near me, my son, and receive thy father's and thy mother's blessing!"

The old man's reason had fled. But a day or two before he was buoyed up with the hope that never deserted him; to-day he was a poor imbecile, with his hands stained with his child's blood.

The horrified priest was dumbfounded; but he was a man of strong moral courage, and a man of action. Quickly he gave his instructions. The stableman was ordered to gallop off at once to Evreux, and his brother was handed over to the care of the women. Then it occurred to him that he had not seen his nephew Jacques that morning. What had become of him?

Was he at the foundation of this terrible crime?

He made inquiries, and ascertained that about an hour before his arrival Jacques had ridden away in the direction of Louviers.

There was still another horse in the stable, which the priest saddled, mounted, still clad in his cassock and wearing his rolled felt hat, and set off in the direction of the town, where he at once put the authorities on the track of the fugitive. On his return to the Cheval Blanc, the gendarmes and those who had been invited to the dinner were there.

The scene is almost too painful to describe. The childish old man in the centre of the horrified guests, and the poor broken-hearted Annette, with her face buried in the bosom of the priest, who sought to comfort her. All the hope and dreams of earthly joy and happiness vanished at the very moment when the cup of sublimity was raised to her lips.

"It is indeed a hard fate, my girl, but you will find comfort in the convent, and in your prayers for the soul of him who is lost to you in this world," whispers the priest, and there is a heavenly light in her beautiful eyes as she turns them gratefully up to her comforter.

The rest is soon told. Within a couple of days Jacques Narbonne is captured and brought back to Evreux. Upon him was a large sum of money and valuable jewellery stolen from the officer's valise, which, in spite of the most vigilant search, could not be found. If needed, this was sufficient evidence to prove his complicity in the crime; but a stronger proof was forthcoming.

Lying upon the bed in the room where the murder had been committed was the corpse of the young officer. It looked now like a figure in wax as the high candles at head and foot cast their soft lights upon the bloodless face. There could be no mistaken identity now. It was the countenance of the handsome young Pierre, with the gentle smile that used to play upon it in his happy boyhood days. He seemed to have grown younger in appearance since death.

Jacques Narbonne, manacled and between two gendarmes, was brought into the room. The face of the dead was covered by a white handkerchief, and the prisoner was placed at the foot of the bedstead. One moment of silence, and the priest snatched the silk cloth away, disclosing the features to full view. With a terrific yell Jacques shrieked out, "My God! we have murdered my brother Pierre!" He staggered back, and would have fallen had not his guards supported him.

Of course this was conclusive evidence, and the wretched brother made a full confession of the crime. He took all the blame upon himself, seeking to exonerate his father as much as possible, although he could not deny that the old man had made the fatal gash. He described what took place between them on the night of the tragedy. How the old man had shown him the valise which was so heavy, how their curiosity induced them to break it open to look upon its contents, how the glittering gold, so much of which they had not seen for years, had turned their heads, and how the idea of murdering the officer had flashed into his—Jacques's—mind.

His father would not listen to him at first; but he touched him on his only tender and vibrating chord. He told him how shocking it would be to welcome his son home to a house of poverty—he himself, likely enough, without a sou—he called attention to the fact that the mortgages would be foreclosed in a week or two, and that his brother would come back to look upon a couple of miserable outcasts.

These arguments worked upon the old man, and he at length determined to commit the deed. Who would know, if the horse that the officer came upon was ridden a distance away and turned loose with its trappings, but that the soldier had been waylaid and murdered on the road? The body could be readily disposed of later on in that unfrequented wood.

And so the deed was done.

The trial, a mere matter of form, took place, and Jacques Narbonne suffered the penalty of the law in front of the Cathedral of Evreux, the guillotine being erected in the place.

Two weeks afterwards there was a simple funeral, with but a solitary mourner, who prayed as he followed, on foot, the elm coffin carried to the little churchyard of St. Taurin. It contained all that remained of the unhappy innkeeper of the Cheval Blanc, who had died, still imbecile, and whose only friend was his brother, who prayed to God fervently to have mercy upon the soul of the father who had committed one of the most tragic murders in the annals of crime.

Legalised Suicide.

IT has not always been held to be an offence against the State for a man to take his own life, even though it was always recognised that as long as a man could be of use to the community he was liable to be considered as the property of that community. Valerius Maximus tells us that when Marseilles was a Greek colony anyone who wished to commit suicide was at liberty to appear before the town council, or Six Hundred, and state his reason for desiring to be rid of life. If the elders approved of his argument, then he was supplied with a draught of hemlock juice, which was kept in the Town Hall for the benefit of intending self-destroyers. In Ceos, five hundred years before Christ, old people above the age of sixty, and all who were incapacitated from work by reason of their infirmities, were permitted to take their own lives after applying to the magistrates for a certificate of approbation. Those who ignored this formality were denied funeral rites. These are examples of legalised suicides pure and simple, and entirely distinct from suicides in lieu of execution, which was common enough in olden days. The Pharaohs generally permitted their condemned to die by their own hands, if they were of rank; the Greeks substituted suicide for beheading as a privilege, and up to modern times a present of a bow string in Turkey, or a sheet of gold-leaf in China, was a gentle hint to the recipient that if he did not at once slay himself, he would be killed by the hand of the public executioner, or the hired assassin. In England suicide has never been legal, though the greatest sympathy was expressed for women who, too, preferred death to dishonour, and occasionally Christian burial was permitted them.

Criminal Marriages.

STRANGE as it may seem, at one time our Statute Books contained a list of heavy penalities incurred by those who married persons whom they were forbidden to. As may be expected, in the days when the priesthood was paramount in Great Britain the laws forbidding marriage within certain degrees of relationship were rigorously enforced, and only if the culprits insisted on considering their marriage binding were they punished, otherwise the Church declared that the wedding was null and void. The penalties for these marriages may rather be considered as chastisement for defying the authority of the Church, but in the Statute of Kilkenny, passed in 1367, we have certain marriages declared to be offences against the civil law of the realm. That statute ordained that any Englishman who married an Irishwoman should be mutilated in a horrible manner and then put to death. This law was the outcome of fear that England might become Irish, rather than that the sister Isle become subject to Britain. Henry VIII. slightly modified this cruel enactment in 1537, though he decided that no English man or woman should marry with any person of Irish blood, even though the latter were naturalised, unless both had done homage to the King in Chancery, and were bound by recognisances with sureties to continue loyal subjects to the British Crown. The merry monarch would not brook the slightest breach of this ordinance, and for those who despised it he had a gallows ready. Needless to say both these harsh laws have long been swept off the Statute Book.

THE MURDER of HENRI MARTINI

HIS SON LOVED THE SAME WOMAN AND SLAUGHTERED HIS FATHER IN A FIT OF JEALOUSY.

"My son, I never thought to meet you
In such a foul disguise"
—LIPSEY'S "Bacheron."

THE theatre was already crowded with a brilliant audience. Fair leaders of Parisian society rubbed shoulders with their frailer sisters of the demi-monde, vieing with each other in splendour of attire; artists, authors, critics, soldiers, and politicians forgot for the moment their little private animosities in asking each other what the new play and the new actress were going to be like.

In all circles expectation ran very high, for the play had been carefully puffed and boomed beforehand by the Press, and the accounts of the new actress, Louie le Grau, that had filtered into Paris from the provinces were all of an enthusiastic and eulogistic character.

Louie, it was said, was surpassingly beautiful; she also sang divinely, and had the grace and carriage of a goddess. No wonder, then, that Paris, ever ready to fall at the feet of a fresh beauty, had sent her bravest and best to witness Louie's initial performance.

The orchestra began tuning their instruments. The first bell rang. There was a lull in the buzz of general conversation—an excited pause, in which everyone turned round and regarded the musicians curiously.

The musicians were the heralds that went before the new goddess, and, therefore, in the eyes of the audience, they were persons of interest.

One box, close to the stage, on the left-hand side, had, until this moment, remained empty. Now, however, the door opened, and two gentlemen, both fashionably dressed, and evidently, from the smiles and nods that greeted their appearance, well known to many people in the house, entered and took their seats.

The one who sat on the right-hand side was a tall, dark man, with a touch of grey in his thick, curly hair, that hung in loose ringlets over a high, prominent forehead. The expression of his face was unusually grave and earnest, his eyes were fine and penetrating, his mouth firm and rather cruel, and the lower part of his head was seamed with lines that spoke eloquently of deep thought and a strenuous life. His name was Henri Martini, a prominent and vastly successful member of the Paris Stock Exchange, and at the time of which we write—some forty years ago—the most important financier in the French capital.

The young man at his side, with the curly brown hair and the fresh, buoyant manner, was his only son, Jules. The son was, in many respects, as well as appearance, the exact antithesis of his father, being, in fact, of a gay, pleasure-loving disposition, and in no way disposed to follow in the steadfast footsteps of his serious parent.

Jules had little in common with his father—he resembled in most things his dead mother—indeed, it may with truth be said that the cold, passionless, unloving nature of Henri Martini repelled the son, even as it had repelled the wife—the wife who had now been dead some seven years.

The second bell rang.

The conductor, amid a storm of applause, leapt into his seat, seized his baton, and the orchestra burst forth into a lively overture. They were playing an overture to a comic opera, full of light, tripping melodies and mirthful movements, and yet, though they knew it not, they were playing the prelude to one of the saddest, one of the most appalling tragedies that ever shocked the heart of the civilised world.

How strange, how incongruous, and yet how typical!

Out of laughter cometh tears, and out of these fair, flitting strains, tinkling with gaiety and light-hearted joy, was evolved the dirge of three souls; now, all spoke of movement, colour, light, and happiness; but wait patiently, reader—the strains shall lose their buoyancy, shall become afflicted with the sighs and the groans of misery, the howls of impotent passion, and the rage of jealousy, and shall gradually become evolved into the dirge of three souls that lie rotting on the flowerless banks of Acheron.

"Fancy Henri Martini being here," whispered a lady to her male companion.

"Oh, I suppose he wishes to keep his son out of danger."

"Well, is he not bringing him into it?"

"No, no, you misunderstand me. Henri Martini knows well that Jules will go about and see the sights. He, therefore, thinks that it is wiser that his father should accompany him. Nothing else, I am convinced, would have dragged the serious Henri to a comic opera."

"He is immensely rich, is he not?" asked the lady.

"Rich! Henri Martini is, I suppose, at this moment the richest man in all Paris."

"Has he ever had any—any adventures? You know what I mean," said the lady, with a suggestive look, and a little giggle.

"Never."

"Did he love his wife?"

"No."

"Then why did he marry her?"

"She brought him a fortune."

"It is a pity he does not meet somebody to spend it on," said the fair dame, with a shrug of her ample white shoulders.

"No fear of that. Hush! the curtain is about to rise."

Suddenly the lights in the house went out, the curtain rose, and the comic opera commenced with the usual loud and strident chorus.

The interest of the audience was very lethargic until about half an hour after the raising of the curtain, one of the comic characters in the play announced that the "Queen of the Silver Lilies" was about to enter.

At once the audience became all attention, for the "Queen of the Silver Lilies" was impersonated by Louie le Grau, the new actress, whom everybody had come to see, and of whom report spoke in such rapturous terms.

The orchestra drifted into a slow waltz tune.

The lights on the stage burnt dimly. Suddenly from the back of the stage, bathed in a silvery light, the "Queen of the Lilies" appeared.

For half a minute the house was completely dumbstruck, then it burst into wild, uncontrollable applause.

Louie le Grau bowed, and walked up to the centre of the footlights, and began to sing.

The audience was held spellbound as much by her art as by her beauty, which was matchless.

To describe Louie le Grau is impossible; we can but hint at a loveliness that surpasses all description.

Her complexion was the finest imaginable—made out of moonbeams and rose leaves—her eyes were of the deepest violet, and her hair was of a strange bronze, golden colour that was always flashing with new hues and shadows.

But what so particularly raised her above the beauty of her compeers was the extraordinary capabilities of her eyes, which could at one moment freeze the sternest heart by their angry glance, and at the next melt a bosom of stone with a soft, melting look which was indescribably bewitching.

At the conclusion of the performance, Louie le Grau was acclaimed by all present as the greatest success of the Parisian season. She was hailed before the curtain again and again, flowers were showered upon her, and "bravos" and "huzzahs" resounded through the theatre as if they would raise the very roof.

"Isn't she wonderful?" suddenly cried young Jules Martini, turning to his father with cheeks aglow with boyish enthusiasm.

"Yes, she is certainly wonderful."

The answer surprised Jules; he had expected his habitually morose and serious parent to shrug his shoulders and utter some contemptuous exclamation. Verily, he thought, Louie must indeed be wonderful if his father admitted her attractiveness.

The two men left the building, stepped into their carriage, and drove at once away.

Both of them were very silent. The stern-faced father stared out of the steaming windows of the carriage into the rain-slushed streets through which they whirled. When his son spoke, he answered in monosyllables.

When they reached home, he bade Jules good night in the hall, and straightway went to bed.

The young man's thoughts were too much engaged with Louie le Grau for him to take much notice of his father's reserved and unusual demeanour.

Jules could not sleep that night; he could not escape from the face of the beautiful Louie, which haunted him continually.

"I am in love," he said to himself, and determined to send the lovely girl a bouquet and a note in the morning.

Strangely enough, Henri Martini, the father, was also troubled with insomnia that night. He felt that his brain and his heart were on fire. He tossed and turned in his lonely bed, and tried to sleep, but always that strange, wonderful,

Could see no one at present.

child-like face came between him and rest; always he heard the golden melody of Louie's voice sounding in his ears.

Once in the early morning he fell into a momentary slumber, and dreamt that Louie was pressing her warm, roseleaf lips to his, and had wound her snowy arms around his neck, and was whispering "My love!"

He awoke with a sudden start, trembling in every nerve, and with a cold sweat standing out upon his brow.

Henri Martini was in love!

Strange, the man of iron, the controller of commerce, who had always despised and scoffed at all affairs of the heart, and who, although he had married—a very successful financial speculation on his part—but throughout his life up to this moment preserved his heart unscathed, now finally fell a victim to a play-actress's charms.

This was a serious matter for Henri, for such a man was incapable of loving lightly, and he knew perfectly well that passion, the long-denied, when at last it came to him would consume him body and soul, feast on his heart and enchain his every thought.

The next night Jules was again at the theatre—this time alone. He sent Louie round a beautiful bouquet with a little amatory note, and, seated himself in a box, watched the performance.

Louie gave him a smile, and he felt exalted to the seventh heaven of delight.

During the interval between the acts he walked out, and saw his father talking confidentially with the manager of the theatre. A sudden pang of jealousy and suspicion darted through the young man's frame. He saluted his father, and received a cold response.

Presently the elder man approached him.

"What are you doing here, Jules?" he said sternly.

"Amusing myself."

"But you were here last night."

"You see I am here again."

"Well, I do not approve of your conduct. You must not waste your time in such places."

"You are here, father."

"I! I am here on important business with the manager and some friends."

The father walked away and left Jules; he did not like to confess it, but he felt horribly jealous of his own son, and inwardly determined to get him out of Paris at the earliest possible opportunity.

Jules did not see Louie that night, but he obtained her address, and called upon her in the morning. He was shown into a sumptuously-furnished apartment by an old woman, who took his bouquet and told him that he must wait, as Mademoiselle le Grau could see nobody at present.

He waited for half an hour, and then heard the old woman show somebody out—a male visitor, he conjectured, from the tread of the feet.

The old woman, having shut the outer door, rushed back to Louie, who was drinking chocolate.

"Mon dieu! after the father, the son!"

"What do you say, Lala?" said Louie.

"The young Martini is here."

"Here? Where?"

"I showed him into the ante-room while madam was engaged with the father."

"Dear me, this is very curious. I will see him."

"Like that?"

"Oh, no, that would not be proper, and he so young, too."

Jules was shown in, and spent a pleasant half hour chatting to Louie, who was now attired in a pale green dressing-gown.

As he was leaving, he saw a man's glove lying on a side table in the room.

"My father's!" he cried.

Louie burst out laughing.

"This is droll," she said.

"My father has been here?"

"Yes, on important business."

The young man stamped with rage.

"He is a liar and a hypocrite; have nothing to do with him," he cried passionately.

"If you forget your manners so, I shall have nothing to do with you," answered Louie.

Jules at once prayed her forgiveness, and having at last gained it, left the house, cursing his father inwardly with all the strength of his being.

And now began a long series of entanglements and fencing at cross purposes between the two Martinis.

Whenever the son left the house the father was suspicious; whenever the father was not at home the son was in a frantic state of jealousy.

At first Henri had thought of ordering his son to leave Paris, but he knew that Jules had a little money of his own, and thought it possible that the wild, impulsive youth might point-blank decline to obey him, and live in Paris in open revolt against the parental authority.

Besides which, on second thoughts, Henri found that by keeping Jules at home he could keep a closer surveillance over him, watch his movements closer, and frustrate more easily any attempts of his to win Louie's affections.

Henri Martini bought Louie a beautiful house, furnished it magnificently, provided her with carriages, servants, horses, and every luxury. She lived with him as his mistress, and as such, it must be admitted, showed a very tolerable fidelity.

Henri visited her every day. He indulged her moods and caprices, which were many, and in no way curtailed or hampered her inclinations, which were, to say the least, extravagant.

He was never happy unless he was with her; everything she did delighted him; her whims and fancies were all to him law; he obeyed her slightest wish, and did her every bidding.

In a word, he passionately adored her; she was his goddess and he was her worshipper—a worshipper who had never knelt at other shrines, but came to her an earnest, whole-hearted neophyte.

But the humour of the situation came in the fact that

Louie, although she regarded him with feelings of friendship and affectionate toleration, did not love him—no; she loved Jules, his son!

The father and son were constantly playing hide and seek about her house.

Jules would slip in whenever he found the opportunity.

He never went to the theatre for fear of his father's wrath, and pretended that he never saw or thought of Louie when he was alone with his parent.

In his own heart—to himself Jules confessed it—he began to hate and detest Henri.

He would always inquire anxiously at night from the servants whether or no his father was at home, and if, as was frequently the case, he was not, the young man would spend hours tortured by the pangs of imaginative jealousy. Again, he would frequently loiter about the precincts of Louie le Grau's dwelling, when he would see his father enter and remain there for hours and hours.

Often he would see all the lights in the house extinguished, except the light in Louie's bedroom, which would burn steadily and brightly. On one of these occasions his rage could not contain itself; he seized a large stone and flung it with all his might against the window, smashing the glass into a thousand fragments.

There was a great commotion; servants were aroused, and the surrounding streets searched, all to no purpose, for the culprit had fled.

Louie was greatly alarmed and Henri Martini unusually thoughtful.

"Who could have done so senseless a thing?" said Louie, when she had been removed to another bedroom, and was revived with copious draughts of champagne.

"I only know one man who can throw a stone like that," said Henri.

"And who is that, my dear?"

"My son."

"Your son!"

"You have not seen him lately?"

"I! Why should I?"

"You used to see him at the theatre."

"Oh, now I remember. A pretty boy, my dear! No; I have not seen him for ages."

In spite of this, however, Henri Martini kept a closer watch than ever upon the movements of his son.

He secured him a responsible position in a large and prosperous business house, so that the greater portion of the young man's time was employed in work, and Henri also contrived matters so that the little leisure that fell to his son's share should be expended on little cares and duties, which he himself imposed upon Jules.

The young fellow fretted under this obvious restraint, the reason for which he was not slow to guess.

Every spare moment he spent in the company of Louie, although now his visits to her were more seldom and of a lesser duration. This angered him more than ever against his father, whom he gradually grew to hate with so fierce a resentment that it is hard to remember that Henri was the author of his being. The climax of the affair came at last.

One evening Jules snatched a propitious moment to get away from a task his father had set him—that of interviewing two hundred workpeople *re* a rise in their wages—and hastened to Louie's house.

DROVE THE GLEAMING DAGGER INTO HIS BREAST.

He was received by the beautiful girl with open arms.

They chatted and made love to each other for some time, and then Louie began to bethink herself of Henri.

"My child," said she, "you must be going now. I expect your father."

"No, no, he will not come to-night!"

"Why not, child?"

"He has work in plenty to do. I left him with two hundred workpeople to interview. You will certainly not see him to-night."

Louie at first had her doubts, but Jules's kisses and assurances gradually put these to rest, and the two gave themselves up to a night's carousal.

They retired to rest early.

About half-past eleven that night, Lala, Louie's old maid, always on the watch for catastrophes and misadventures, heard Henri's key turn in the outer door. Quick as lightning she fled to her mistress's room, and, without any ceremony, flung open the door.

"Holy mother!" she cried, "here is a fearful thing—Monsieur Henri is here!"

Louie screamed and turned deathly pale.

Lala did not stop to speak further.

She seized hold of Jules, plucked him out of the bed, opened a wardrobe, thrust him into it, and shut the door just as Henri Martini entered the room, which, luckily, was in semi-darkness.

On seeing Henri, Lala started back with a theatrical gesture.

"Oh, lord! how you frightened me, sir!" she said. "We did not know you were in the house."

"Why, it is Henri," said Louie, from the bed, in a weak voice.

Henri Martini turned up the gas. The first thing that met his eyes were a man's clothes thrown in disorder on to a chair.

Henri reeled; he was speechless with passion and rage.

Lala saw what had happened, and gave a cry of dismay.

Henri rushed over to Louie and grasped her by the throat.

"Harlot, you have deceived me!" he cried.

"What do you mean?"

"There is a man here, concealed in this room at this very moment!"

"Are you mad?"

"Look there, do you not see his clothes? Where is he? Tell me at once! Show me this very moment!"

A look of malice gleamed in Louie le Grau's eyes.

"Open the wardrobe door, Lala," she said, in a quiet voice.

Lala obeyed, trembling; the door was opened, and Henri stood face to face with—his own son.

"Jules!"

"Father!"

The exclamations were mutual. Henri rushed at his son and felled him to the ground with a terrible blow.

He would have stamped upon his prostrate form, but Louie, who had sprung in terror from the bed, and Lala clung to him and pulled him from the young man's half-insensible body.

"So this is the culprit, is it? This the snake in the grass, Jules, my son!"

"Henri, come away!"

"Do not talk to me, harlot!"

Jules staggered slowly to his feet, blood running freely from his nose and mouth.

"I will pay you for this father," he said.

"Call me not father! Henceforth you are no son of mine. I disown you. Beg your bread, die in the gutter, starve before my very eyes, but do not think that I will ever help you!"

Louie and Lala dragged Henri from the room, and left Jules to dress. Then ensued a frightful scene between Henri Martini and his mistress.

Accusations and recriminations followed hard upon each other, but at last a calm came after the storm.

Louie, who was badly in want of some ready money, burst into tears and begged Henri's forgiveness.

She had been wicked, she knew, she had wronged Henri, her lover, but she was sorry, oh, so sorry! If he would forgive her all would be well.

"I love you, Louie, you know it, and therefore I forgive you"

"Oh, my love!"

"But you must promise me one thing."

"What is it? I will promise you anything, Henri."

"You must never see Jules again."

"I promise."

"He will call on you, pester you with letters and supplications. No matter, you must never see him again."

"I promise you, Henri! On my soul, I promise!"

All was now smooth; matters had been put on their former footing, and Lala retired from "the lovers," well pleased with the turn the evening's adventure had taken.

Meanwhile, what of Jules? On being left in the room, he hurriedly dressed himself and slunk out of the house. He went home as quickly as possible, and took an old Indian dagger from the wall of his bedroom and a box of snuff from the mantelpiece.

He was determined to murder his father.

He went out again and walked to Louie's house.

The house was quite dark, save for a light in Louie's bedroom window.

Jules smiled grimly.

"I can wait," he said to himself, and began to whistle softly a tune, a favourite tune of his, out of the overture to the comic opera in which Louie performed; the overture of light melodies and mirthful movements, the overture to the fearful tragedy which was now imminent.

Presently Jules heard the door of Louie's house bang.

He stepped back into the shadow of a neighbouring doorway. He saw his father stop for a moment, light a cigar, and then at a leisurely pace proceed in the direction of his home.

Jules followed him with stealthy steps.

Gradually he drew up closer to him.

In his right hand he held the dagger, and in his left the box of snuff.

He was almost level with his father. He lurched forward and, with a deft movement of his left hand, opened the snuff-box and discharged its contents full into Henri Martini's eyes.

With an awful cry he reeled against the wall.

For the moment he was quite blind; the snuff burnt his eyes, and his agony was intense.

Jules rushed at him.

Henri caught hold of his left arm and tried to fling his unknown assailant on one side. Jules slipped and fell to the ground, pulling his father down with him. As the blinded man fell the parricide drove the gleaming dagger deep into his breast.

With a groan Henri sank back, and Jules, rising once again, ran from the scene of his terrible crime.

Jules ran swiftly back to Louie's house.

He rang at the bell with all his might and main.

He heard scuffling feet and whispering voices.

"Who are you?" inquired Lala, before opening the door.

"Jules. Let me in quick!"

"Jules, is it? Well, you will never be let in here again."

"Will not Louie see me?"

"No; never again."

"Oh, ask her to see me to-night. It will be the last time."

"No; go away."

"I have murdered my father!"

"What! You are drunk, little man. Go away!"

Jules crept away from the door and went home.

He was found in bed in the morning with his throat cut from ear to ear, and a penknife lying at his side.

They buried the father and son together. Louie le Grau soon found a fresh paramour, but she was careful this time to see that she did not have two lovers in the same family.

She always said it was a droll experience, but one that she did not wish to have again.

Record Criminal Families.

THE palm for being the most criminal family certainly belongs to the "Jukes" of America, whose history has been accurately studied by criminologists. Of this remarkable family 709 individuals have been traced. Of all the men not twenty were skilled workmen, and those ten learnt their trades in prison. In their ranks are to be found seventy-nine notorious criminals, besides a host of minor offenders. The women were as bad as the men, more than half of them being prostitutes and petty thieves. The more respectable "Jukes" were paupers, 180 receiving out-door relief. The history of this debased family is regarded as one of the best proofs of the existence of hereditary criminality. Coming to England we find one Dalton, hanged in 1730. Dalton's mother had three husbands and two sons. Two of the husbands were executed at Tyburn and the third committed suicide; the mother was transported, and both her sons died on the gallows. This is the best Great Britain can do in the way of criminal families.

The Prototype of "Fagin."

WHETHER Charles Dickens actually drew Fagin from life or created the character will never be determined, but there is not the least doubt that schools for thieves did exist, even long before the great novelist lived, and Fleetwode, some time Recorder of London, has described one of these institutions in a letter of his to Lord Burleigh. The judge recounts how a gentleman named Wotton, having fallen on evil days, became proprietor of a low ale-house at Smartskeye, near Billingsgate, whither he enticed all the rogues in the city. There, he says, "there was a schole howse sett up to learne younge boyes to cutt purses. There was hung up two devises, the one was a pockett, and the other a purse. The pocket had in yt certen cownters, and was hunge about with hawkes' bells, and over the toppe did hange a little sacring bell; and he that could take owt a cownter without any noyse was allowed to be a publique Hoyster, and he that could take a piece of sylver owt of the purse without the noyse of any of the bells, he was adjudged a judicial Nypper." To this remarkable statement the Recorder adds that a "Hoyster" was a pickpocket, and a "Nypper" a cut-purse.

The Trials and . . Tortures of De La Tude.

THE VENGEANCE OF A KING'S MISTRESS.

"O, what a sympathy of woe is this!
As far from help as limbo is from bliss!"
—TITUS ANDRONICUS.

PART II.

IN crossing the fosse St. Antoine to gain the open road they stumbled on the aqueduct in the middle of it, having ten feet of water at least above their heads, and two feet of mud at the bottom, which prevented their moving to clear it, for it was nearly six feet broad. D'Allégre went tumbling on his companion, and all but threw him down. If he had, they would have been both lost and perished in the slough. But, on feeling him take hold, La Tude obliged him to let go by a violent blow with his fist, and, by a desperate effort, wrenched himself out of the mud, and, seizing his companion by the hair, succeeded in extricating him also. They soon cleared the ditch, and as five o'clock struck were on the high road.

Their escape effected, they bethought themselves of the dry clothes they had brought in the portmanteau, and which they had contrived to keep by them through all their toils and dangers. They quickly assisted each other to change their garments, and, calling a coach, drove to a friend of La Tude's, but he being, unfortunately, at Versailles, they took refuge with another acquaintance, a merchant-tailor named Ronit, with whom they remained concealed for upwards of a month.

La Tude and his companion D'Allégre were now at large, but in France, covered with spies and police, and under a rigorous system of passports, there was little chance of eluding the grasp of the merciless Pompadour. By adopting disguises, travelling separately, and with some assistance from friends, they reached Brussels, but there D'Allégre was discovered and taken. La Tude was a degree more fortunate. He got as far as Amsterdam, in Holland, without molestation, but, conscious that he was not safe even in this foreign country, he was about to sail for Surinam, when he was arrested by order of the French Ambassador, and, to its great disgrace, with the connivance of the Dutch Government. On June 9 the unfortunate refugee was ignominiously sent off to France by way of Rotterdam and Antwerp, and, finally, after enduring incalculable distress of body and mind, he arrived at his old quarters in the Bastille.

Stripped, as at first, of his garments, and covered instead with rotten rags, he was heavily ironed, and cast into a dungeon with a handful of straw. In this state he remained for 40 consecutive months, a prey to the horrors of his situation and the utmost malice of his persecutors.

During this time he converted the usual prison annoyance of rats into a source of interest by perfectly taming first one, and then a whole colony of these animals, which, while they fearlessly fed on what he gave them, would never let a single stranger share with themselves in the privilege. That he got to know and distinguish and name those familiar though repulsive creatures and derive amusement from their gambols was the means of beguiling for hours together the solitude of two years, till a far sweeter gratification was sent to vary his desolate condition.

One day when his straw had been changed he perceived that the truss was bound together by a thong of elder. The idea at once occurred to him of manufacturing it into a flageolet, with which he might cheat his sorrows and diversify his sole prison sounds—those of bolts and chains.

But how could he fashion the instrument? His hands were fastened with huge handcuffs to a bar of iron, and it was with great difficulty he could move them at all. He was destitute of tools, and not for worlds would his gaolers have given him so much as a splinter of wood. Yet with the point of a buckle of his belt he managed at last to cut through the twig and clear it from the pith, and, after several months' toil, he procured a flageolet, which for 34 years never for a moment left him.

Despite of an affecting report of the physician, which stated that purer air and light and exercise could alone save him, no steps were taken to remove him till, a long time after, an overflow of the Seine filled his cell with water.

The room he was removed to was somewhat less ill-aired and noisome than the last, and some pigeons perched on his window-sill. One of these he caught and tamed, and through him the others also. They occupied his cell along with him, and were a wonder to the whole officials of the prison, till his special gaoler, who owed him a grudge since his last escape, insisted, as the price of his connivance, on having more than half of the allowance of wine ordered for his weak state by the doctor. On his remonstrating the wretch came next day with an order to kill the prisoner's unhappy pets. In a fit of frenzy, denied the power of wreaking itself on his enemy, La Tude anticipated the brute by becoming himself the executioner of his poor favourites—an act he afterwards sorely lamented.

A change of governors soon after opened the way to more important events, and brought him into contact with the famous head of police, M. de Sartine, who was henceforth so powerfully to influence his fate.

La Tude in his solitary cell now conceived a project for increasing the strength of the army by substituting muskets for the halberts carried by non-commissioned officers. This scheme was conveyed to the Government by the confessor of the Bastille, and its instant adoption proved the value of the poor prisoner's idea. He had founded on it hopes not only of emancipation, but reward, and these were solemnly promised him. Alas, however, for his anticipations! The only reward he ever received was permission for a two hours' walk on the platform of the fortress.

Having rather indiscreetly repulsed a secret agent who came to sound him as to whether he would sell for a small annual pension the credit of another of his plans—that for public granaries, which, if carried out, might have averted from France the horrors of famine—he incurred the displeasure of M. de Sartine, and had henceforth nothing to expect from that vindictive minister but ill-treatment and continued imprisonment.

A petition from his lately-widowed mother for the restoration of her son proving of no avail, La Tude resolved to bring his case before the public by writing a memoir and throwing it from the platform of his prison when exercising there, addressed to a person he could trust to give it publicity. But there were insuperable difficulties in the way. To prevent his importuning M. de Sartine, he had been deprived of pen, ink and paper. He had, however, a few books—the remnant of a former indulgence—and between the lines of these he wrote his memoir, with a pen contrived by first flattening out and then rolling up a two-farthing piece, and ink made of lamp-black, which he procured by feigning toothache and borrowing a sentry's pipe, and so setting fire to a wick in a pot of oil he had obtained for a sore throat from the surgeon.

His memoir having been written, he waited for some chance by which it might reach the proper channel. From his platform he opened up a sort of correspondence by signs with two young women he saw at a window. When at last he showed them the packet, and managed to convey to them his wish that they should pick it up when it was thrown into the street, they signalled him in the most impressive manner their desire to serve him. Upon that, when the backs of his guards were turned, he flung his precious parcel from the battlements. It alighted at the feet of one of the girls, who instantly picked it up.

Several months passed without anything of moment occuring, save a daily-increasing dumb show of joy on the part of the young women. At last, on April 18, 1764, at nine in the morning, he saw them unfold at their window a roll of paper, which bore in huge letters, "The Marchioness de Pompadour died yesterday, 17th April, 1764." La Tude

thought he beheld the heavens open. He imagined his release to be imminent, and actually began to pack his things. Weeks passed, however, and no sign was made. He wrote to M. de Sartine, and the latter at once brought the minister to the Bastille to inquire into the way in which the news of the death of the notorious courtesan had reached the prisoner. La Tude scented danger to his two young friends and declined to name them. De Sartine had the meanness to say that this determination would be the price of the prisoner's liberty. Brave and honourable, La Tude resisted all efforts to draw from him the names of his informants. Again he wrote to M. de Sartine. The reply was worthy of the man. Close confinement in a dungeon and bread and water. This minister was a fiend. Under pretence of liberating his victim, he took him from his dungeon one night in the month of August. He loaded him with chains that bent him nearly double, and caused him excruciating agony, and had him conveyed, not to freedom, but to his old quarters at Vincennes.

From this prison La Tude once more contrived to escape. This is how he relates the incident in his memoirs.

"I was walking on the 23rd November, 1765, about four

De la Tude and his pets.

in the afternoon, in tolerably clear weather, when suddenly an extraordinary thick fog came on, which at once suggested a means of escape. Rushing from my guards, knocking down some and deceiving others, I actually had the good fortune to get clear off. I hid myself till night in the park, and then slipped into Paris."

As soon as he found himself within the barriers he went to claim the protection of the two young women opposite the Bastille who had before befriended him. They had concluded him dead, but recognised him again, and introduced him to their father, a worthy hairdresser, who lent him a supply of linen and a little money. They also gave him a room in their house and waited upon him most assiduously, thereby showing the excellence of their hearts.

Despairing of being able to escape the vigilance of De Sartine, he wrote to that treacherous scoundrel once more in a humble and submissive manner, and begged him, if he were favourably disposed, to cause three crosses to be placed on a certain door in the Tuileries, which, it seems, he did; but, instead of being marked on the door itself, they were on a paper, which some passer-by amused himself by tearing down. Unaware of his request having been complied with, he resolved to throw himself on the compassion and generosity of the Prime Minister, the Duke de Choiseul, whose noble character seemed to promise him a chance of protection. The duke was at Fontainbleau, whither De la Tude repaired, and, as will be anticipated, was captured on his arrival and conveyed once more to Vincennes.

They threw him this time into a horrible dungeon—the one marked A—whose very aspect made him tremble. It was scarce seven feet and a-half long by six wide. Four doors, each a foot from the other, some of iron, all of them garnished with enormous bolts, sufficed to exclude hope from this living tomb.

He never knew how long he remained in that awful place, for day and night were equally passed in darkness. It would, doubtless, have been his grave but for the humanity of one of the turnkeys. He felt the approach of death and implored the man to give him the means of putting an end to his miseries.

The turnkey rushed from the cell, and shortly after returned with the prison surgeon. Horrified at his situation, the doctor found him so prodigiously swelled that every part retained the impression of a finger when pressed upon. The surgeon insisted on his immediate removal, declaring he had not otherwise four-and-twenty hours to live. Though no one would venture to ask for an order from De Sartine for the prisoner's transfer, it was somehow effected, and in three hours two gaolers came to take him out on their shoulders, and carried him to the first room on the left of the tower. His fever slowly subsided, but the swelling continuing, he prescribed for himself a cure, sanctioned by the doctor—a draught of hot wine, with a plentiful quantity of sugar in it, which opened his pores, closed for months by excess of cold, restored his strength, and at length removed the swelling.

All hope of freedom being at an end, he turned his thoughts to some means of communication with his fellow-prisoners. To establish this intercourse from a chamber where he was under the strictest surveillance was no easy matter, but by this time the reader will understand that difficulties only whetted La Tude's desire to overcome them. To attain his object it was necessary to perforate the enormous wall of the keep towards the garden, where the prisoners went to take the air. He recollected having picked up in his walks the previous year an old sword blade and the iron hoop of a bucket, and carefully secreting them for some time of need; but they were still in the garden, and he was on no account permitted to go there.

He managed, nevertheless, to pass a sufficient time there, by stratagem, to possess himself of his treasures, concealing them about his clothes and returning to his room as if nothing had happened.

The walls of the prison were at least five feet thick, while his hoop was only three feet long. Yet in 26 months of incredible labour he contrived to make a hole in the tower.

His opening completed, he made himself, by uniting slender bits of wood with twine made from his shirts, a sort of long fishing-rod-like stick, which, with a ribbon at the end of it, he passed out at the hole at a moment when he heard a single prisoner locked into the garden. By these means he held long and interesting conversations with his fellow-captives, most of whom had undergone protracted terms of imprisonment for fancied insults to Mdme. de Pompadour, of which they were no more guilty than the sorely-tried La Tude.

His sufferings had been considerably ameliorated through the kindness of the good-natured governor, M. Guyonnet. But about this time a sordid and tyrannous wretch, named De Rougemont, supplanted the old governor, and his first action was to build up and narrow in the windows of La Tude's room, from which he had previously commanded a superb view. Not content with that, he put up across the bars a wire grating, so close as almost to exclude the light of day, and ended by placing at the top of the window a sort of penthouse, by which the prisoner's view of the sky was limited to an almost imperceptible point.

An attempt to procure redress from M. le Noir, who had succeeded De Sartine, on the latter's promotion to the Ministry of Marine, only resulted in La Tude's being remanded to a yet worse dungeon, in which, totally deprived of light, and obtaining air only through the keyholes of three enormous doors, he was probably destined to pass the remainder of his miserable life.

Nine months of this unholy purgatory was endured with marvellous fortitude. Rheumatism racked every joint in the poor prisoner's body, and the swelling once more returned. He had just begun to welcome death as a happy deliverance, when a fit of humanity seized his persecutors.

A new minister had appeared in the person of the virtuous M. de Malesherbes, whose first duty was to visit the State prisons, to judge and console their wretched inmates.

One day the door of La Tude's cell was thrown open, and the officer announced M. de Malesherbes. When told that the unfortunate engineer's captivity had endured for 26 years the minister was seized with a sort of convulsive shudder, his whole features expressed the strongest indignation, and several times during the interview he repeated, stamping his feet as he did so, "Twenty-six years!"

Bidding La Tude keep a good heart and take patience, M. de Malesherbes left him with the assurance that ere long he should have reason to be satisfied. In a few days a turnkey opened his prison and ordered him to follow to the council-chamber, where the Lieutenant du Roi offered him a chair—an unwonted civility.

He was told that M. de Malesherbes only waited to set him at liberty till he should furnish the minister with a note of his means and a list of the clothes he might require for his exit. Freedom on any terms was all that La Tude asked, and he took care to make his list of necessaries as brief as possible.

In the meanwhile, however, the unhappy victim's persecutors had gained the ear of the good Malesherbes with a thousand cruel tales of La Tude's insanity, and the new minister, believing them, came to the determination of sending him to the Paris bedlam at Charenton.

While he was being removed he overheard M. de Rougemont talking to his two guards, and, listening, he distinctly heard the governor warn them that he was a man both ferocious and dangerous. The consequence was that he was immediately bound and placed in a carriage along with another gaunt and hollow-eyed prisoner.

It was during this journey that his guards gave him the first information of the death of Louis XV., which had taken place 17 months before.

After being under the care of the monks of Charenton for some time it was discovered that he was far from being insane, so that the rigorous treatment he had at first experienced was greatly relaxed, and he was allowed to associate with other sane patients. The house afforded a convenient place of detention for young men of good family who, in the heat of youth, had been guilty of some indiscretions, and these were the companions to whom La Tude attached himself. He was now happier than at any time during the long years of his captivity, till his joys were poisoned by a horrible discovery, which rendered his remaining sojourn a prey to misery and despair.

Among the more furious lunatics kept confined in cells, or even iron cages, some, whose attacks were only periodical, were brought back in their lucid intervals to mix as before with the boarders. One of these, lately returned from durance, told him that his old Bastille comrade, D'Allégre, now a confirmed madman, was an inhabitant of one of the cells, and for the last ten years had been chained up, without even a glimmer of returning reason or mitigated frenzy.

These particulars almost turned La Tude's brain too. He petitioned for permission to see his old friend. He was obliged to submit to a delay of some hours, which, he was convinced, were employed in putting clothes on his unhappy comrade of the past, fearing the effect on himself of letting him see him in his usual state of horrible nudity.

At length he was admitted, and tremblingly entered the dark and dismal den. He had thought to behold his former companion; he only found a hideous skeleton, with matted hair, deep-sunk and haggard eyes, and a face so bleached and withered as to defy recognition. He ran, nevertheless, to throw himself upon the maniac's neck, who repulsed him with a sort of horror. "Do you not know your old friend?" asked the hapless inquirer. "I am La Tude, who helped you to escape from the Bastille. Don't you remember him?" He gazed on the questioner with a terrific look, and said, in a hoarse, yet feeble voice, "No! I am God!"

DE LA TUDE DISCOVERS HIS OLD COMPANION D'ALLEGRE.

La Tude could not draw from him another word.

At last, through the kind intervention of a countryman and fellow-prisoner, the young Chevalier de Moyria, and other friends, the day of liberation at last came for poor, persecuted De la Tude on June 7, 1777.

Red-tape, however, bound him in its meshes, and he was practically banished to his birthplace of Montagnac.

On July 15, 1777, he was at a place 120 miles from Paris, on his way to Montagnac, when he was accosted by a man who said his name was Desmants, an employé of the police, and who arrested him in the king's name. What it all meant La Tude could not understand, but it was evident to him that his enemies had again got the upper hand.

There awaited him now a lower depth of degradation than any that had yet been placed upon him. He was sent

to Bicêtre to herd with the vilest criminals, the veriest dregs of society.

For four long years he remained there, without being spoken to by a single kindly soul. The indignities heaped upon him were unspeakable, and the filthiness of his surroundings cannot be described in decent print.

At length the President de Gourgnes, a just and humane magistrate, paid a visit to the prison, and, among others, saw La Tude. He was moved to tears by his story, and told him huskily to send in a memorial at once, and it would receive his immediate attention. The memorial was drawn up without delay, but by some means it was accidentally dropped in the street, and did not then reach its destination. It was, however, picked up by a good woman, one Madame le Gros, who kept a small haberdasher's shop. Her husband was a worthy man, who earned a scanty subsistence by giving private lessons, and the tender feelings of this humble couple received a violent shock on reading the document which Madame le Gros had carried home with her. They there and then resolved to unite their efforts to save the unfortunate victim of a lifetime of tyranny and oppression, and right nobly they pursued their end.

For three years they battled against opposition in high places, but in the long run they triumphed. Madame le Gros, after many failures, succeeded in gaining audience of the accomplished Madame Necker, wife of the great minister of Louis XVI., and the final order was given for La Tude's release.

He was arrested on May 1, 1749, and was absolutely set free on March 22, 1784—35 years in prison without a trial, and without a charge brought against him!

After his liberation La Tude wrote his memoirs, which became a formidable weapon in the hands of the revolutionary party, and he had the satisfaction of being present at the taking and destruction of the Bastille in 1789. This much-injured man died in 1804, in the eighteenth year of his age.

THE EXECUTION OF

Robert Johnston.

A Harrowing Story of long-drawn-out agony. Perhaps the most awful scene ever witnessed on the scaffold.

"I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Hamlet," Act I., Scene 4.

THERE has been no such horrible sight seen at any execution amongst all those which have taken place in the United Kingdom during the last three centuries as was witnessed at the hanging of Robert Johnston, which took place in Edinburgh, in the year 1818.

This legal slaying of a malefactor was of such an appalling nature that it caused a thrill of horror to run through the country, and the remembrance of accumulated horrors seen on that dreadful day did not die out for many years.

The circumstances which attended this execution disturbed the public mind to a much greater extent than their importance would seem to warrant. But when we reflect on the awful facts of the case we are bound to admit that it was so truly and obviously repugnant to human feeling that it was but natural it should make an immediate and forcible impression, and we know that anything which affects the equitable administration of the laws ought to make a permanent one.

The interest felt at the time can thus be accounted for, and the proceedings involved so many grave legal principles and suggested so many lessons, both politic and expedient, to the law-makers and also its dispensers that it will not be at all surprising if they shall be found to have an interest of some permanence. In order to give our readers a "plain, unvarnished tale" we shall endeavour to sift opinions from facts, taking as correct only those accounts which have been specially given by eye-witnesses, and not contradicted in the statement from the legal authorities. There were so many accounts written at the time, so many pamphlets published on the matter, that it is somewhat difficult to extract the kernel of truth from the vast shell of exaggeration which surrounds it. Many of the publications referred to were indiscreet and intemperate, though penned by those who had just witnessed the revolting scene, whilst others were written badly and hastily, and solely because it was believed they would sell. They possessed no literary merit and were penned without reflection or ability. Others again were issued with the obvious intention of giving the discussion a political turn, of which it possessed nothing at the commencement, and for the purpose of creating a diversion in favour of the executive of the city of Edinburgh. They are so malicious and so utterly void of talent, and even of common-sense, that they could not fail to have injured the cause they were intended to defend. The account, however, which attracted the most attention and made the greatest tumult was penned by a gentleman who was prompted to write on the subject by the accident of his being confined by illness to a room which gave him a complete view of the whole wretched and discreditable transaction. In order that our story may be made clear and intelligible it will be necessary to give some account of the circumstances of the case, though the scene at the execution is what we primarily desire to describe.

Robert Johnston, the wretched culprit, was the son of respectable parents living in the city of Edinburgh, who had always been regarded as upright, honourable people. He himself became what may be termed a "ne'er-do-weel," and by his actions occasioned much grief to his relations. He finally committed the crime of highway robbery from a Mr. Charles, candle-maker and merchant, and a councillor of Edinburgh. He had two accomplices, Lee and Galloway, and the crime was unaccompanied by either aggravated circumstances or any great amount of ability or address. His life was justly forfeited by the laws of Scotland, and there was nothing in his case to excite an uncommon degree of attention or pity. He was convicted and sentenced to death, his two companions in crime being transported, Galloway for fourteen and Lee for seven years.

The date of execution was fixed for December 30, 1818, and the scaffold was erected in front of the northernmost window on the west side of the new North Church, St. Giles's, Edinburgh. And here came the first matter which called attention to the execution and roused the indignation of the people of the Scottish capital. Criminals had originally been executed outside the walls of the city, and near to St. Leonard's, the spot which Sir Walter Scott gives in his "Tales of my Landlord" as the residence of David Deans and his family. Executions also took place on Leith Walk, and for some considerable time in the Grassmarket, the widest street in Edinburgh, and one which at the present day is the least important thoroughfare. For some time previous to the pulling down of the old prison executions took place on an elevated platform which communicated with the gaol and which formed the roof of a building connected therewith. No criminal had been hanged, however, since the old Tolbooth was removed and the buildings connected with it, and, as it was rumoured that Johnston was to be hanged in front of the library rooms belonging to the Faculty of Advocates and Writers to the Signet, petitions and remonstrances were made against this proceeding to the magistrates by the inhabitants of the Lawn-market, and also by the Society of Writers, and it was also objected to in the public prints, and other places for execution were suggested. The gallows was, however, fixed to the west wall of the church of St. Giles's, the scaffold being supported by that venerable edifice. The erection was prepared by a skilful tradesman, and was duly inspected and certified to be adequate for its purpose by the surveyor of public works. But, however this may have been, the distance between the beam and the platform, which was not definitely stated in feet and inches, was declared by various spectators to be too short.

To this scaffold Johnston was brought. He walked with a firm tread from the lock-up house to the gallows and ascended the steps at 2.40 p.m. He was placed on a square table erected upon the scaffold, which was intended to answer

the purposes of a drop. On this table or platform he took his station with great composure, affectionately toying with a silk handkerchief, which was supposed to have been the gift of a girl with whom he had lived. When this was removed from his neck, to facilitate the adjustment of the noose, he carefully secured it about his person. He exhibited some reluctance in allowing the rope to be fastened round his neck, and from his changing countenance and the convulsive working of the muscles it was evident that his courage had at last deserted him. He spent fifteen minutes in prayer, shook hands with the reverend gentleman who attended him, and then gave the signal for his fate, but, through the culpable negligence of those concerned, nearly a minute elapsed before the table could be dragged from beneath him, and, even when that was

THE AWFUL SCENE ON THE SCAFFOLD.

accomplished, his toes rested on the flooring, and thus prevented his whole weight being suspended by his neck. One of the spectators exclaimed, "Good God, the man's feet are not off the scaffold!" and it was then seen that the sudden jerk had occasioned a partial compression of the windpipe, not sufficient to cause death, but more than enough to cause exquisite agony. His whole frame was convulsed, but his mental powers were not destroyed, or even suspended. Three times he drew his feet up, evidently with the intention of accelerating the termination of his agony. This would have been a successful effort, but as he approached complete strangulation he lost the muscular power necessary to keep his feet clear, and, when his legs again straightened out, his feet falling to the platform by the force of gravity, the pressure on the windpipe was relieved, and, as the blood circulated freely again, and the fresh air filled his lungs, he was once more in the full possession of his faculties and capable of realising the horrible position he was in and of suffering the excruciating tortures of semi-strangulation. He made several attempts to assist in his own destruction, but did not succeed. This terrible scene lasted several minutes, the convulsive jerks of the suspended body, the twisting and turning of that fearful object covered by the ghastly-looking white cap, the drawing up of the legs, the bounding, plunging, and struggling of the body, till, vitality ebbing away, the feet again touched the floor, seemed to so horrify the spectators that they stood as if petrified. The officials, to their shame be it said, stood passive during all these efforts at self-destruction, when at length a man named Archibald Campbell called out for carpenters to try and get the wood below cut away. After a few minutes' delay several men arrived with axes, and for at least ten minutes smashed away with these tools, but could make no impression on the firmly-fixed woodwork. Dur-

ing all this time poor Johnson still hung, convulsed in every fibre, his body spasmodically twitching and occasionally bounding into the air from off his toes, and dropping again with a force which shook the scaffold, but which was not sufficient to cause his death. His struggles were awful to witness, and when the noise of the axes had ceased a strange, unearthly, gurgling noise was heard coming from the hidden throat of the hanging wretch, and the immense crowd, hushed into absolute stillness by the very horror of the scene, imagined he was asking to be cut down. One spontaneous burst of indignation and pity welled from the lips of ten thousand spectators, and resounded from Parliament Street to the Castle Hill. Then followed a pause, still as the silence of death, for a few seconds; but again they saw the quivering of the limbs, the gradual drawing up of the legs, a convulsive bound into the air; they heard the creaking of the new hempen rope, the groaning of the gallows, and the hissing noise from beneath the hideous mask of death, and another shout arose, accompanied with a shower of stones. A policeman near the scaffold struck one of the spectators, who at once yelled out "Murder!" which seemed to act as a signal for a second shower of missiles, which caused the officials to desert their post and seek safety in flight. One after another they rushed down the steps of the scaffold and fled for refuge, like convicted criminals, to the Tolbooth Church as a sanctuary, leaving scaffold and criminal to the mercy of the mob. The officers were left without a man to direct them—without counsel, without advice, without a head. In the meantime the crowd continued to throw stones, and many panes of glass in the church windows were broken. The populace then took possession of the scaffold, cut the wretched culprit down, loosed the rope, and after some time succeeded in restoring him to his senses. They then endeavoured to carry him off, and had proceeded some distance down the High Street, when the police-officers proceeded with their truncheons to assail the individuals who were around the half-dead man, and succeeded, after a time, in recovering possession of him.

The unhappy Johnston, only half alive, stripped of part of his clothes, and his shirt turned up, so that the whole of his naked back and upper portion of his body were visible, lay extended on the ground in the middle of the street in front of the post-office, the silken handkerchief, the parting gift of his sweetheart, still clutched tightly in his right hand. At last, after a considerable time had elapsed, some of the police-officers, laying hold of the miserable man, dragged him trailing along the ground for about twenty yards into their office, which was also in the old cathedral of St. Giles's. Johnston remained there about half an hour, and was attended by a surgeon, who bled him in both arms and in the temporal vein, by which means he succeeded in restoring the half-suspended animation, but the unfortunate man never uttered a word. In the meantime a military force arrived from the Castle, under the direction of the magistrate, and the soldiers, having been ordered to load with ball, were drawn up in the street surrounding the police-office and place of execution.

It is but fair to the Scottish mob to remark here that they showed the sense they entertained of the supreme obligation of the law by their cry of "No rescue!" when they had obtained their end and relieved their generous, though rude, feelings by cutting the man down after having witnessed his ineffectual struggles to rid himself of life, and there was no mischief done of any kind whatever beyond that already alluded to, of the breaking of some panes of glass in the church where the officials had taken refuge.

It was thirteen minutes to four o'clock when Johnston was carried out of the police-office to the scaffold. The execution and its circumstances had already occupied upwards of 45 minutes, as the table was withdrawn at exactly one minute to three.

The culprit's clothes were thrown around him in such a way that he seemed half naked, and while a number of men were about him, holding him up on the table or platform and fastening the rope again about his neck, his clothes fell down in such a manner that decency would have been shocked had it been a spectacle of entertainment or amusement instead of an execution. While his clothes were being adjusted the wretched man was left vibrating, upheld partly by the rope round his neck and partly by his feet on the table. At last this was again removed from beneath him, when, to the indescribable horror of every spectator, he was seen with his face uncovered. He was hanging by the neck, clear of the platform, and slowly but surely strangling. The gaze of the assembled multitude was riveted on the exposed face of the dying man. His mouth twitched convulsively, and then his upper lip curled completely up and exhibited his teeth, the lower lip being drawn down, and giving the face the appearance of a snarling bulldog. His eyes rolled about in the wildest way, the whites only being visible, whilst a foam oozed through his clenched teeth, and the muscles of his face twitched convulsively, and added to the horrible hideousness thereof. But still further horrors were yet to be witnessed before the life departed from the body of the butchered Johnston. One of his hands broke loose from the cords with which it should have been tied, and, raising it slowly and with evident difficulty, he twisted his fingers in the noose and endeavoured, mechanically and convulsively, to loosen it. Tearing and struggling at the rope with his hand, his body jerking and twisting and writhing in space, his face working most horribly, his eyes rolling about in fearful fashion, his teeth gleaming white and seeming to snarl defiance at the awe-stricken multitude, whilst the foam dripped from his jaws as it would from the jowls of a mad dog—this was the sight which the people of Edinburgh witnessed on that awful day in December, of the year 1818. There was a deathly silence for a few seconds, as though every one of the ten thousand tongues was paralysed with very horror. And then dreadful cries were heard from every quarter demanding that the frightful drama should be put an end to, but the command to the soldiers rang out, "Fix bayonets!" and as the gleaming steel rattled from scabbard to muzzle the crowd dropped back apace, and silence again fell o'er them.

And then from the stillness a woman's piercing shriek rang out—and another—and yet a third—and a young female form was seen striving madly with those in the front row of spectators, and, breaking away, she dashed wildly, sobbing and screaming, across the open space between soldiers and spectators. But a steel barrier was interposed, the men crossing their bayonets to bar her passage, whilst an officer hurriedly stepped forward and prevented the half-demented girl from impaling herself on the pointed steel. She tried to break loose, but assistance was at hand, and she was carried away, shrieking pitifully, "Robert, Robert, let me come with you!" It was Johnston's sweetheart, the girl who had given him the handkerchief he treasured so much!

And now the executioner was seen standing on a chair and forcibly disengaging the hand of the dying man from the rope. He then descended, leaving the man's face still uncovered, and exhibiting a spectacle which no human eye should ever be compelled to behold. For some minutes, which seemed like so many hours, the struggles of the poor, unfortunate Johnston continued. Several times he shook his head as a retriever would on leaving the water, and the foam flew round and about the scaffold and splashed into the faces of those nearest to it. Every few seconds the body would bound convulsively into the air, drop heavily, shiver three or four times, and then writhe and turn and twist as though trying to get its head out of the deadly noose. And still the teeth gleamed white through the parted lips, the eyes still rolled, and occasionally they glared straight into those of the horror-stricken crowd for an instant, then flew upwards, and nothing but the weird-looking whites of them were visible. At length it was deemed advisable to throw a napkin over the face of the writhing being, and at 23 minutes past four o'clock the struggles finally ceased, and only a lifeless piece of clay hung from the gallows beam.

This horrible butchery—it can be called nothing else—lasted nearly an hour and a-half, from 2.59 till 4.23, long after the lamps were lighted for the night and the moon and stars were distinctly visible.

There was a great outcry all over the United Kingdom, and the question was raised as to how far it was consistent with the sentence of the Justiciary Court to prolong the execution after four o'clock. An official statement was published in which it was asserted that "every step that human prudence could devise had been taken, and the sentence of the law would have been executed in the usual manner if a lawless mob had not stepped forward to prevent it, under pretence of showing humanity to the criminal.

"The state of the fact certainly is that, notwithstanding the pains that had been taken to have the apparatus perfect, the rope was found to be too long, a fault alone imputable to the executioner, who has since been dismissed on that account."

It has been said that a warrant to hang a man until he is dead is not a warrant to hang a man until he is half dead, to re-animate him, or, rather, to restore him to sensation and feeling, and then to hang and torture him a second time. The case of Margaret Dickson, commonly called "Half-hangit Maggie," was told as illustrative of the principle that a person who has once been suspended and the time elapsed, cannot again be taken hold of for the same crime.

His Own Monument

HOW AN EXECUTED TRAITOR HAS SERVED AS A WARNING TO OTHERS FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS.

FROM the earliest ages there have been many strange methods of disposing of the bodies of the dead; the Egyptians, in the days of the Pharaohs, made mummies of the dear departed; the Apaches of to-day expose their lost friends, wrapped in pitched cloth, on small platforms in the fields; the Parsees find their last resting places in the maws of the hungry vultures that wheel round and round the towers of silence; but with the exception of Lot's wife, of Biblical fame, we know of but one individual who has served after death as his own monument. The story is an interesting one.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century there dwelt at Batavia a Dutchman named Pieter Eberfeld, a homely sort of man as far as outward appearances went, content to sit in his verandah and smoke his large pipe during the heat of the day, and ponder over things in general. His thoughts, however, chiefly were directed to the mismanagement of the Island of Java by his compatriots, and he revolved schemes in his head by which the condition of the colony and of the people might be improved. In these schemes he himself played an important part, for underneath the stolid exterior there burned an inextinguishable fire of ambition which raged until the Dutchman felt that if he did not do something to achieve renown and power he must die. Long he thought over the matter, consuming much tobacco, until a definite plan shaped itself in his large head. The constitution was undoubtedly the source of government in Java; the constitution governed badly; therefore the constitution must be overthrown.

Thus far had he got when the idea struck him that when the existing authorities had been deposed, someone must rule, and his overweening conceit assured him that he was the very man to assume the reins of government and convert the colony into a prosperous land. At last he had something to work for.

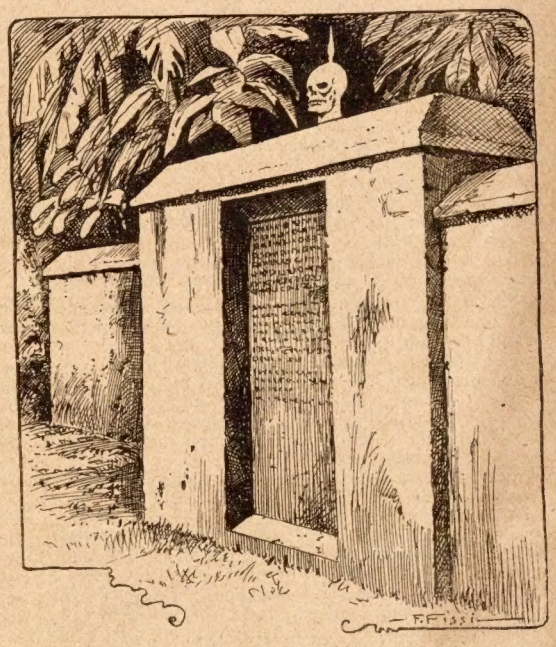
Some little distance from the humble house in which the would-be monarch lived stood the only church in Batavia, a gloomy building as befits the meeting place of Lutherans. There the governor of the island and all his satellites were wont to attend every Sunday, any absence from the Sabbath worship being regarded as a serious breach of discipline. What could be easier, argued Pieter, than to blow up the whole of the administration at once while attending Divine service? Eberfeld was not versed in European history, or he might have recalled the ill-fated attempt of Guy Fawkes, and shuddered at the terrible punishment which followed on discovery; as it was, he had no fear, and if he suffered at all from qualms of conscience at such a wholesale murder, he stifled the still, small voice with the reflection that after all the ministers could not be hurried to eternity when employed better than when saying their prayers.

By day the conspirator might be seen in front of his house, smoking or dozing; but by night he was hard at work. Starting in the cellar of his house, he commenced to dig a tunnel right underneath the church. The work was wearisome; but if his labours succeeded the reward would be great. Several months were occupied in constructing the underground passage, the toiler being assisted by one compatriot only, a Dutchman, sworn to secrecy, but ignorant of the actual object of the operations.

At length a spot directly beneath the sacred building was reached, and then Eberfeld commenced to collect kegs of gunpowder. He did not like to entrust the depositing of these to his assistant, fearing that he might guess what was about to happen, but when the day for the coup drew near, and the proper quantity of powder was not deposited, Pieter, fearing that he would miss his opportunity through delay, called his friend to his aid. One glance sufficed to show the latter what was the real project in hand, and after working with Eberfeld for a time, he went off to the Governor and gave information of the plot.

Police and soldiers surrounded Pieter's house, and before he could fly or make any resistance he was secured. Then the full extent of his diabolical design was made clear. His trial was short and he was senteneed to death.

On the morning following the sentence, Pieter Eberfeld was led out into the square facing his house, and forced to watch the soldiers pull his dwelling to pieces stone by stone, his furniture and other belongings being burnt before his eyes. Then from the stones the guards commenced to build a monument, working in a leisurely fashion. The condemned man asked what was the object of the column of masonry, and he was told that he would learn later. When the erection was about six feet high, it was noticed that in front of it there was a groove about the width of a man's body. Then the building operation ceased. Pieter was bidden to kneel on a mat in front of this monument, and at one blow his head was cut off. The bleeding body was picked up and placed standing in the groove, the front of which was then walled up. Mortar was next poured in to hold the corpse in position and to prevent decay. In the mortar a spear was buried, the point projecting about twelve inches at the top. The monument was neatly finished off, and the head of the traitor impaled on the spear head, to be left as a perpetual record of Pieter's treachery.



The Tomb of the malefactor.

Later, a plate bearing an inscription was added, and even to-day the ghastly memorial stands in Batavia, the hideous skull of the perfidious Dutchman grinning at the passers-by, a warning to all not to tread in the perilous paths of treason. We give an illustration of this remarkable monument, taken only a few months ago, showing the traitor's head, which still caps his tomb and tombstone combined.

An Inveterate Counterfeiter.

ALMOST immediately after capital punishment for coining was abolished, there was an enormous increase in the amount of counterfeit coin manufactured. Try as they would, the police of the times were unable to put down making and uttering base money. The judges and magistrates were too lenient, and only after repeated convictions was anything like an adequate sentence passed. The king of coiners, in those days, was James Lane, who pleaded guilty to making bad money, in September, 1838. Mr. Justice Vaughan sent Lane to transportation for life, remarking that it was useless to look for reformation in a man who at thirty-five years of age had been convicted thirty-seven times of coining. Lane's first offence took place when he was but nine years old, and he was never out of prison from that time for more than six weeks at a stretch!

Criminal Problems

IS TRANSPORTATION OBSOLETE?

WHEN, with the advance of civilisation, and the consequent increase of sensibility, it became obvious that the infliction of the capital penalty was not the only means of punishing serious crimes, when people began to revolt against the indiscriminate taking of life on the merest pretext, and argued that, if death were the punishment for lesser offences, there was nothing to keep the wicked from committing murder on the slightest provocation, it became necessary to find some means of disposing of the criminal population. This country possessed no convict stations capable of accommodating any considerable number of prisoners, for hitherto there had been no need for such institutions, the grave containing the greater offenders and the local prisons being amply sufficient for the mere babes in crime, who were incarcerated for very short terms. If a real reduction was to be made in the number of those sent to a felon's doom, some provision must be made for housing and guarding them.

Then it was that it was proposed to send our convicts, who under previous circumstances would have been punished with the rope, to the newly-found colonies, the idea being to utilise them in developing the country. The suggestion was eagerly discussed in Parliament, and on all sides it was agreed that it was far better to send the evilly disposed out of this country, and lodge them in uncivilised lands, where they might do a certain amount of good and could do no serious harm, than to keep them at home, where their influence would tend to corrupt the good, and where they would be not only a source of never-ending anxiety to the guardians of law and order, but also a serious expense to the nation. So it was ordained that our convicts should be sent to Australia, or Van Diemen's Land, and there turned to practical account.

In thus instituting transportation as a recognised English punishment, our law-givers were but improving the old penalty of exile, or banishment, which has existed in the world ever since the day that Cain was cast forth from the society of his parents and branded as a vagabond and an outcast on the earth. The advance of the times, the mutual regard which had sprung up between neighbouring nations, made it impolitic that criminals should be sent out of their own country and deported as unwelcome guests to other nations; so, but for political offenders, exile early fell into desuetude. Further, it was recognised that expatriation would be no serious punishment to the majority of rogues, so labour and servitude had to be added to the mere exile and a definite place of abode selected, so that other nations should not be injured by the dregs of our own country. Thus Botany Bay and similar stations sprung into being, and at regular periods of the year ships laden with the off-scourings of this country left for the south.

In time the convict settlements developed, the colonies became habitable, the discovery of mineral wealth drew thousands to the distant shores, and a self-respecting and loyal people covered the lands which had previously been given up to convicts. These new colonists complained, and with justice, against the scum of the Mother Country being "dumped" in the colonies, thus giving to the population of Australia and Tasmania more than their fair proportion of criminals. England had then to consider whether transportation was still expedient. It was clear that to keep the convicts in their proper places convict prisons would have to be built in the new colonies, and the Government wisely saw that it would be cheaper to build such penal settlements in England, and would also save the cost of deporting malefactors. It was therefore decided to keep our convicts at home, and to substitute labour on the public works for the work of developing land abroad. Transportation from Great Britain ceased.

Still transportation is not obsolete; it is yet to be found on the Statute Book of a portion of our great empire. In India it has been found an excellent method of punishing murderers, in cases where the judge does not think the infliction of the extreme penalty warranted. Throughout our vast Oriental dominions the natives who have taken life are liable to be transported to the Andaman Islands, a punishment which they regard as even more awful than death itself, for to the Eastern mind to cross the "Black Water," especially as a guest of the Government in a convict ship, is to lose all hope of a happy hereafter. The transportation is purely a penal measure, and is in no way associated with any desire to develop the islands. It is effective, it is cheap, and it puts out of the question any fear of rescues being effected or escapes taking place.

France also sends her more important convicts to the Ile du Diable, a pestilential penal settlement made celebrated by the revelations of Captain Dreyfus. Her method of transportation is also purely penal, and, again, is not supposed to assist in the development of the region to which her malefactors are deported. The exile to the mines of Siberia, and also the simple exile in the same dreary region, may, too, be considered under the head of transportation.

Now, is transportation a rational mode of punishment? Is it in accordance with the best principles of penology? Under certain circumstances it may be permissible—nay, even beneficial. Where it is humanely carried out, and a definite benefit to the community accrues therefrom, it is a reasonable punishment. Thus, where the prisoners really are doing useful work in preparing the way for free settlers, and at the same time are not treated with undue harshness, transportation is really useful. Neither deportation to the Ile du Diable nor exile in Siberia can be said to answer either of these requirements, for the conditions are brutal and the result of the punishment brings no good to the community.

Our Indian transportation, however, is quite justifiable and defensible. True, the convicts are not developing a country which is ever likely to be of the slightest use to Great Britain, but they are usefully employed, under most humane conditions, in a climate which suits the native of India very well. Their exile is a positive advantage to the community, for it relieves India of many undesirables, and provides a punishment which is most effective, deterrent, and exceedingly cheap; it lessens the necessity for the infliction of the capital penalty, while in no way unduly handicapping the community. Given proper conditions and a suitable place to send convicts to, together with means to ensure the entire absence of all undue harshness and tyranny, and transportation might again prove a useful method of repressing crime.

LEAVES FROM . . OUR NOTEBOOK

Hereditary Hangmen.

IN early times in England the persons selected to inflict capital punishment were not voluntary servants. In many manors certain families were hereditary executioners, and though they held small plots of land as rewards for their services, they could not refuse to do the office to which they were born. Shakespeare ("Coriolanus," Act I. Scene 1) mentions hereditary hangmen, and it is noticeable that in the manor of Stoneley, close to the poet's native village, there were four such hereditary officials. As a mark of distinction the "gallows men" had to wear a red tippet on their shoulders. They had to do the menial work of the manor as well as hang the knaves. Cole, in his "Commentary on Littleton," also speaks of tenure for gallows services, and says that of all forms of socage, or tenure, that is the worst. France had the family of Sansons as headsmen from 1683 to 1847, but after seven generations the office fell into the hands of M. Deibler, through the direct line failing.

Answers to Correspondents

The Editor will be pleased to answer any suitable questions.

FRENCHMAN.—We do not recognise "crime passionelle" in England.

CLAVERING.—There is now evidence that Dougal went through a form of marriage with Miss Holland abroad.

CHEMIST.—As far as is known, fewer persons are poisoned in September than in any other month of the year. Poisoners prefer May.

B.F.—We really cannot be expected to answer questions foreign to the paper. If you want a bull dog pup advertise in a "doggy paper."

CORPORAL.—Military law, as you should know, differs widely from the ordinary penal code. Its full rigours are rarely enforced, save in time of war.

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SUPERFLUOUS HAIRS.—How many ladies with a strong growth of hair upon some prominent part of her features has not cried out from the depths and bitterness of despair, "Is there no relief for this vile intrusion? Must I live on and on and each day develop more and more into a human monstrosity! Must this deformity become still more unsightly, this burden more oppressive?" The answer heretofore given to this appeal has been far from satisfactory, yet we must all admit that we live in an age of new and wonderful inventions, and one of these I claim. To prove this, send in confidence, a stamped addressed envelope, and I will tell you what it is.—Address, MRS. NEVILLE, 9, Newington Causeway, London.

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